

Circling the Waters:
The Keichō Embassy and Japanese-Spanish Relations in the Early Seventeenth Century

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ABSTRACT

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This project examines the fraught diplomatic and commercial relations between Tokugawa Japan (1600–1868) and the Habsburg Spanish empire in the early seventeenth century. Vessels from Japan called at the port of Acapulco in New Spain three times within a decade, the first attempt in world history at a bilateral commercial relationship across the Pacific. In doing so, the ships also challenged the Spanish monopoly over the waterways between Latin America and Asia. Japanese commercial and diplomatic outreach peaked with the Keichō Embassy to Southern Europe (1613–1620), an effort that dispatched Japanese representatives to the court of Philip III in Madrid, but failed in its mission to secure regular contact between New Spain and northeastern Japan. In analyzing these events, I contrast Japan's pursuit of commercial and diplomatic expansion with Spanish ambivalence and insularity, inverting essentializing narratives defined by Japanese isolation and European engagement. The project also compares the diplomatic models employed by each polity. I argue that Spain's established imperial vision and the shogunate's emerging hierarchical model of foreign relations placed both polities at the pinnacle of their respective diplomatic frameworks, handicapping efforts to communicate, build trust, and integrate each into the worldview of the other. Ultimately, a Spanish policy of containment closed off the Americas to Japan; soon after, the Tokugawa divested from its relationship with the Spanish Philippines in the face of alternative commercial partners and ongoing religious tension. The project thus integrates Japanese history into world history and the history of the Pacific, while questioning the notion of a straightforward commitment to expansion among Europe's early-modern empires.

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Note on Places, Dates, and Names

Places

The city of Edo was the *de facto* capital of the Tokugawa shogunate, and is the present-day city of Tokyo. “Mexico” refers to the capital city of New Spain, not to the contemporary country. In order to avoid repetition and confusion in the text, “the archipelago” always refers to Tokugawa Japan, and “the islands” always refers to the Spanish Philippines.

Date Masamune’s political base in northeastern Japan went by multiple names in the sources. As a daimyo, Date ruled over Sendai domain (仙臺藩, *Sendai han*), and governed from a city of the same name. However, Spanish documents most often referred to Date as the “King of Ōshū” (*Rey de Voxu*, and so on). “Ōshū” (奥州) denoted a large province in the northeast under the imperial system predating both the Tokugawa and Date. The daimyo’s holdings constituted a significant portion of Ōshū, but Date did not lay formal claim to the entire province. Today, the entire northeastern region of the island of Honshu is referred to as Tōhoku (東北, literally “east-north”), denoting an area much larger than either Sendai domain or the imperial province. Sendai City remains by far the largest urban center in Tōhoku. I refer to Date’s domain as Sendai when discussing events in Japan, but replicate the Spanish use of “Ōshū” or “King of Ōshū” when discussing European sources and use Tōhoku when discussing contemporary Japan.

Dates

In the seventeenth century Japan used a twelve-month lunar calendar and marked the years through a succession of eras proclaimed by the imperial court. Most of the events discussed in the following pages took place during the Keichō (1596–1615) and Genna (1615–1624) eras. For example, Date’s vessel the *San Juan Bautista* first departed Japan in the eighteenth year of the Keichō era, on the fifteenth day of the ninth month (Keichō 8.09.15), corresponding to

October 28, 1613. Dates throughout have been converted to the Gregorian calendar, unless Japanese dates are quoted in the source. In these instances, the Gregorian date follows. The footnotes present dates in yyyy.mm.dd format. Thus January 26, 1615 is rendered 1615.01.26. When Japanese chronicles are cited, the Gregorian date again follows its Japanese counterpart.

Names & Spellings

Spanish officials and representatives are referred to by their family name or a shorthand of their noble title. Instances of the latter kind include “Salinas” for Luis de Velasco, Marqués de Salinas, “Lerma” for Francisco Gómez de Sandoval, Duke of Lerma, etc. Unless otherwise specified, “Habsburg” refers to the Spanish branch of the House of Habsburg, most notably Philip III.

As noted above Spanish sources most often referred to Date Masamune as the “King of Ōshū,” distinguishing him from Tokugawa Ieyasu, the “Emperor of Japan” (*emperador de Japón*). The daimyo was not a king, nor was the retired shogun an emperor, but the two appellations were accurate as a bald statement of hierarchy. Unless otherwise noted, the “Emperor of Japan” always refers to a Tokugawa, not to any member of the imperial family in Kyoto. Ieyasu’s son Hidetada held the position of shogun from 1605 while Ieyasu presided over affairs in “retirement.” Spanish sources most often referred to the younger Tokugawa as “the prince” (*el príncipe*) until he became “emperor” himself after Ieyasu’s passing. Conversely, Japanese source approximated the names and titles of Spanish counterparts phonetically or applied Japanese words such as “lord” (国主, *kokushu*) and “king” (国王, *kokuō*). The use of these titles in Japanese and Spanish sources are discussed in more detail in the relevant chapters.

Finally, all quotes from Spanish sources retain the original orthography.

List of Abbreviations – Archives and Source Collections

AGI	Archivo General de Indias, Sevilla
AGS	Archivo General de Simancas
ASV	Archivio Segreto Vaticano, Vatican City
DNS	<i>Dai Nihon shiryō</i>
SDS	<i>Sendai-shi shi: Tokubetsu hen 8 (Keichō ken'ō shisetsu)</i>

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Introduction

This dissertation reassesses the relationship between Tokugawa Japan (1600–1868) and Habsburg Spain (1516–1700) in the opening decades of the seventeenth century. For nearly two decades, Japanese leadership embarked on a program of outreach across the Pacific, attempting to establish commercial ties between the Viceroyalty of New Spain (present-day Mexico) and the Japanese archipelago. The effort began with correspondence between Tokugawa Ieyasu (1543–1616) and the Spanish Philippines; it culminated with the unprecedented site of three ocean-going vessels built in Japan departing for Acapulco over the course of four years. The effort entailed sustained diplomatic investment in the foreign correspondence, the intermediaries that carried it, the goods that accompanied both, and the vessels that transported all three across the world’s largest body of water. Most of all, it required a vision that extended beyond the horizon to another continent.

There is no shortage of narratives devoted to vision, expansion, and ambition in the early modern world. Traditionally, their protagonists are disproportionately European and their arcs chart the traits of contemporary human society: sovereign states, a global economy, growing claims to mastery of the natural world, a notion of historical progress, and the conviction that the culture and contributions of Western Europe contain the seeds of such progress. English speakers embed this perspective in our appellations (“New World,” “Old World”), in our labels (“Age of Discovery”), in our eras (“Early Modern”), and in how we frame historical inquiry (“The Rise of the West”).¹

¹ See, for example, William McNeill, *The Rise of the West: A History of the Human Community* (London: University of Chicago Press, 1970). For debate on the term “early modern” see Jack Goldstone, “The Problem of the ‘Early Modern’ World,” *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 41, n. 3 (1998), 249–284, and Kären Wigen, “Mapping Early Modernity,” *Early Modern Japan* 5 n. 2 (1995), 1–13. Goldstone is critical of the term’s utility and argues in favor of “advanced organic economies/societies,” but I agree with Wigen that “early modern”

Scholars of world history have produced counter-narratives in abundance, challenging notions of straightforward progress and frameworks that root development exclusively in the European experience. These narratives contend that divergence between “the West” and “the Rest” manifested in the eighteenth, not the fifteenth century. They suggest the world’s economic engine steadfastly remained in eastern, not western Eurasia. They demonstrate that innovation did not stagnate outside of Europe, nor did Europeans hold a monopoly on natural inquiry, territorial ambition, or a robust public sphere and civic culture. Moreover, they offer sobering correctives by illustrating that the path to apparent European dominance relied as much on exploitation, prejudice, and subjugation as on enlightenment, progress, and science. These narrative counterweights remain crucial to any honest and reflective appraisal of the past.²

At the intersection of East Asian and world history, two aspects of the above counter-narratives stand out in contrast to this dissertation: many focus on China, and in turn many attempt to explain why the peculiar alchemy of culture, character, and circumstance that presumably drove Europe’s transformative achievements did not manifest in the Middle Kingdom. Numerous scholarly works and textbooks point out that Ming China sent massive treasure fleets as far as eastern Africa eight decades before Columbus, and explain how and why Ming leadership soon after turned its attention to inland borders and coastal defense.³ Other

facilitates productive comparison among societies. I use the term throughout in reference to the Japanese and Spanish polities.

² Andre Gunder Frank, *ReOrient: Global Economy in the Asian Age* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998); Alfred Crosby, *The Columbian Exchange: Biological and Cultural Consequences of 1492* (Westport: Greenwood Publishing Company, 1972); Joseph Needham, *Science and Civilization in China*, 7 vols. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1954–); Anthony Reid, *Southeast Asia in the Age of Commerce, 1450-1680* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988); Peter C. Perdue, *China Marches West: The Qing Conquest of Central Eurasia* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2005); Mary Elizabeth Berry, *Japan in Print: Information and Nation in the Early Modern Period* (Berkeley, Calif: University of California Press, 2006), among many others.

³ For a recent monograph, see Edward Dreyer, *Zheng He: China and the Oceans in the Early Ming Dynasty, 1405–1433* (New York: Pearson Longman, 2007). The voyages are also a staple of world history courses and textbooks.

works emphasize that vibrant Chinese merchant diaspora fueled a vast maritime marketplace but did not benefit from the marriage of state and commerce that sent successive waves of European traders crisscrossing the globe.⁴ Additionally, historians have argued China's demand for silver and production capacity powered the first truly global economy, requiring us to adjust the axes of world history.⁵ The Middle Kingdom may have even been punished by its own success, its impressive capacity to organize a large population through an agricultural regime dissuading concentrated investment in the energies powering industry.⁶ The "great divergence" between China and West may have stemmed from the absence of cotton, coal, and colonies that powered the Industrial Revolution in England.⁷ Whether the focus is on exploration or encounter, economy or energy, these inquiries explain absence and embrace alterities. At their best they disabuse us of the notion that the drives for exploration and innovation, and the capacity for progress (however contested and circuitous), are proclivities inherent to the West and adopted by the rest. These counter-narratives cleave apart ahistorical essentialisms from people and cultures, but still must explain choices and priorities, action and reaction, during a particular era. Put

Robert Marks, *The Origins of the Modern World: A Global and Ecological Narrative* (Rowman & Littlefield, 2015) is one example.

⁴ Wang Gungwu, "Merchants without Empire: The Hokkien Sojourning Communities," in *The Rise of Merchant Empires: Long-Distance Trade in the Early Modern World, 1350–1750*, ed. James D. Tracy (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 400–421.

⁵ Dennis O. Flynn and Arturo Giráldez, "Cycles of Silver: Global Economic Unity through the Mid-Eighteenth Century," *Journal of World History* 13 n. 2 (2002), 391–427.

⁶ Mark Elvin, "The High-Level Equilibrium Trap: The Causes of the Decline of Invention in Traditional Chinese Textile Industries," in *Economic Organization in Chinese Society*, ed. W.E. Willmott (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1972), 137–172.

⁷ Kenneth Pomeranz, *The Great Divergence: China, Europe, and the Making of the Modern World Economy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000).

simply, they often explain why Asia “did not” and why Europe “did”—explore, expand, and develop.

By contrast, I investigate what happened when an Asian polity—in this instance, Japan—reached out across an ocean. It did so precisely at a time when we conceive of open water as an invitation to European expansion, and the northern Pacific as doubling as a Spanish lake.⁸ Japanese efforts did not encounter a warm reception. Spanish officials warily greeted letters, vessels, and representatives from the archipelago, displaying the caution and insularity traditionally ascribed to their counterparts in East Asia. Spanish galleons sailing annually between Acapulco in New Spain and Manila in the Philippines established the first commercial link between the Americas and Asia—in some tellings, the birth of a truly global economy—but Japanese outreach marked the first attempt to bridge the Pacific diplomatically.⁹ In doing so, Japan pushed to reconfigure the Pacific as a site of inter-societal commerce rather than intra-colonial trade. Manila granted entry to *Spanish* Asia, just as Acapulco marked entry into *Spanish* America. Spain’s logic may have been global in scale but it was imperial and mercantilist in nature, defined by attempts to control the flow of goods, people, and access between its American territories and its outpost in Asia. Japan’s Pacific foray thus inverts a familiar dynamic by revealing an Asian polity seeking long-distance commercial connections, and a European polity balking at the proposition.

⁸ William Schurz introduced the term “Spanish Lake” in his eponymous articles. See Schurz, “The Spanish Lake,” *The Hispanic American Historical Review* 5, no. 2 (1922): 181–94

⁹ Arturo Giráldez explores the relationship between Manila and the global economy in *The Age of Trade: The Manila Galleons and the Dawn of the Global Economy* (Rowman & Littlefield, 2015).

Much Ado about Something “Little to Do” with Japanese History

Japan may seem an unlikely candidate to upend the dynamic of an open Europe and an insular Asia. The country exhibits a complicated and contradictory history with concepts like East and West, with notions of progress and modernity, and with attendant ideas of being early or late to history. Japan always seems to be catching up or falling behind, as measured against some vague, but usually external and often Western, barometer of cultural, economic, or political development. This problematic standard has been applied to the country’s achievements and offenses, its triumphs and transgressions, in equal measure. Thus debates raged about the origins, consequences, and significance of Japan’s rapid ascent up the industrial and international order in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the “miracle” of its postwar economic growth, and the ontology and pathology of the nation’s particular brand of empire, aggression, and fascism.¹⁰ Early works on these large questions adopted the language of diagnosis, delineating what Japan got “right” and explaining what went “wrong.” More recent studies productively mine the human experience in Japan rather than treating the Japanese experience of the human, tackling the meaning, maintenance, and construction of a plethora of concepts from modernity to empire, gender to germs.¹¹

¹⁰ Thomas C. Smith, *The Agrarian Origins of Modern Japan* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1959), Maruyama Masao, *Thought and Behavior in Modern Japanese Politics*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1969), W. G. Beasley, *The Meiji Restoration* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1972), E.H. Norman, *Origins of the Modern Japanese State: Selected Writings of E. H. Norman* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1975), Gavan McCormack, “Nineteen-Thirties Japan: Fascism?,” *Critical Asian Studies* 14, no. 2 (1982): 20–32, Chalmers Johnson, *MITI and the Japanese Miracle: The Growth of Industrial Policy, 1925-1975* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1982).

¹¹ Carol Gluck, *Japan’s Modern Myths: Ideology in the Late Meiji Period* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985), Anne Walthall, *The Weak Body of a Useless Woman: Matsuo Taseko and the Meiji Restoration* (Chicago, Ill: University of Chicago Press, 1998), Ruth Rogaski, *Hygienic Modernity: Meanings of Health and Disease in Treaty-Port China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004), Brett L. Walker, *Toxic Archipelago: A History of Industrial Disease in Japan* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2010), Jun Uchida, *Brokers of Empire: Japanese Settler Colonialism in Korea, 1876-1945* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2011).

Historiography of Japan's foreign relations at the beginning of the Tokugawa (also called Edo) period (1600–1868) is dominated by the Janus of unification and exclusion, with the latter supposedly being the price extracted to achieve and maintain the former.¹² The implications have been profound, welding Japanese historical identity to self-imposed isolation, and establishing conflict between internal coherence and external influence as a canonical dynamic to be accepted, modified, or rejected by generations of historians. Scholars have found much to mine and much to question. Did the Tokugawa adopt a policy of overzealous exclusion or judicious containment? Should the period be defined by the archipelago's contact with, and ultimate expulsion of, Catholic Europe? Or is it better understood as a realignment of Japan's role within East Asia? Did isolation set the stage for two centuries of stability or did the archipelago forfeit a voice and forgo opportunity in the realm of world affairs? The development of global and transnational history has stimulated efforts to transcend easy contrasts and stark binaries. It has also raised questions about the relationship between Japanese and world history, and the contributions each can make to the other.

Relations between Tokugawa Japan and Habsburg Spain factor little into these debates, especially those in English. The rupture between the two polities fed into an original grand narrative of Japan's "Christian Century," defined by the arrival, spread, persecution, and expulsion of Catholicism and its European adherents.¹³ The encounter with the Portuguese defines this century of contact, bookended by their initial arrival on a Chinese junk in 1543 and

¹² Edo (present-day Tokyo) was the seat of the Tokugawa shogunate, which ruled Japan from the beginning of the seventeenth century until the 1868 Meiji Restoration. Periodization always comes with caveats. 1603–1868 is another common set of dates given for the Tokugawa period. Tokugawa Ieyasu assumed control of Japan following the battle of Sekigahara in 1600, but was not named shogun until 1603. I adopt the earlier dates here, as Ieyasu's engagement with Spanish authorities predated his title as shogun.

¹³ C.R. Boxer, *The Christian Century in Japan, 1549-1650* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1951).

their final expulsion from the country in 1639. Contact with Spain began later and ended earlier, roughly coinciding with the establishment of Spanish Manila in 1571 and Tokugawa rejection of a final commercial vessel from that settlement in 1625. The letters and goods, as well as the promises and threats, exchanged between Spanish officials and authorities in Japan thus fit into a narrative path already laid out in terms of the failed encounter with Catholic Europe, and by extension, the West. There are compelling episodes—a shipwreck off the island of Shikoku in 1596, a marooned governor-general in 1609, but their emplotment serves an exogenous narrative of Japan’s reception and rejection of “the West.”

The best-known episode of Japanese-Spanish encounter is often used as the exception proving the rule of Japan’s isolationist impulse. In 1613, the daimyo Date Masamune (1567–1636) dispatched his retainer Hasekura Tsunenaga (1571–1622) and the Franciscan friar Luis Sotelo (1574–1624) from his domain in northeastern Japan to pay their respects to Pope Paul V (1550–1621, r. 1605–1621) and to request that Philip III (1578–1621, r. 1598–1621) of Spain authorize direct trade between Japan and the Viceroyalty of New Spain. The lead delegates of what is now called the Keichō Embassy to Europe (1613–1620) made their case in the palaces of Madrid and Rome, marking one of the very few times any Japanese person traveled to Europe prior to the nineteenth century.¹⁴ Existing accounts, especially those in English, explain that growing persecution in Japan hamstrung the endeavor from the start, and Hasekura returned in

¹⁴ “Keichō” (慶長) is the Japanese era name (年号, *nengō*) spanning the years 1596–1615 of the Gregorian calendar. Date’s embassy departed in 1613, or Keichō 18. The full modern-day title of the mission is 慶長遣欧使節 (*Keichō ken’ō shisetsu*). The earlier Tenshō Embassy to Europe (天正遣欧少年使節, *Tenshō ken’ō shōnen shisetsu*, “The Tenshō Youth Embassy to Europe” in contemporary scholarship) visited during the Tenshō (天正) era, in the 1580s. The Jesuits sponsored this mission, escorting four Japanese youths sent by the Kyushu Christian daimyo Ōtomo Sōrin (1530–1587). Its purpose was to garner papal support for the Jesuit Mission in Japan. See Michael Cooper, *The Japanese Mission to Europe, 1582-1590: The Journey of Four Samurai Boys through Portugal, Spain and Italy* (Folkestone: Global Oriental, 2005).

1620 to a country well on the way to closing its doors to outside influence.¹⁵ This framework has existed since the nineteenth century and casts Date and Hasekura as visionary victims, felled by the intolerance and differing priorities of their Tokugawa superiors.¹⁶ Equally problematic, Date's efforts are often severed from earlier Tokugawa outreach, isolating the daimyo's mission from the broader current of Japanese history and precluding potential for instructive analysis.

The Keichō Embassy has attracted a steady trickle of scholarly attention in Japan since the early years of the Meiji period (1868–1912). In the early twentieth century, Murakami Naojirō pioneered the collection, transcription, and translation of Japanese and European-language sources chronicling Japan's contact with Catholic Europe. His edited volumes of primary sources remain standard references today, and this dissertation draws upon them extensively.¹⁷ In particular, Murakami oversaw the compilation and publication of multiple volumes of the *Dai Nihon shiryō* (大日本史料, hereafter *DNS*), a monumental chronicle of Japan's history comprising chronologically-arranged excerpts from myriad primary sources.¹⁸ Strikingly, Murakami and his fellow editors broke from precedent for the Keichō Embassy, opting to collate every known source pertaining to the embassy in one separate volume rather

¹⁵ Boxer, *Christian Century* and Mark Caprio and Kōichirō Matsuda, eds., *Japan and the Pacific, 1540-1920* (Aldershot: Ashgate/Variorum, 2006) are two examples. Other works mention the embassy but offer little comment. See Michael Laver, *The Sakoku Edicts and the Politics of Tokugawa Hegemony* (Amherst: Cambria Press, 2011), 61–62.

¹⁶ For an early example of the visionary rhetoric, see C. Meriwether, “A Sketch of the Life of Date Masamune and an Account of His Embassy to Rome,” *Transactions of the Asiatic Society of Japan* 21 (November 1893): 1–106. Meriwether offers Date's foresighted desire to open Japan as one explanation for sending the embassy. The other two possibilities being that Date wished to convert to Christianity or that he wished to spy on Europe, with an eye towards attacking it. All three take as their premise a paradoxically aggressive but isolated Japan that Date either rebelled against or exemplified. See Meriwether, 57–61.

¹⁷ In particular Murakami Naojirō, ed., *Ikoku Ōfuku shokanshū, Zōtei Ikoku nikki sho* [*Collected Letters of Correspondence with Foreign Countries, Selections from the Register of Foreign Affairs, Revised Edition*] (Tokyo: Sunnansha, 1929). The work combined two earlier publications in one volume.

¹⁸ Publication continues to the present day. As of 2017, just over 400 volumes have been published.

than embedding each of the sources in the series' overall chronological narrative. The preface explains why: "As, however, the Embassy had very little to do with other events which occurred in Japan during that time, and as most of the materials are from European archives and libraries, we have thought it advisable to devote one complete volume to the materials relating to the mission, instead of following our usual chronological scheme."¹⁹ Murakami thus produced an indispensable collection of disparate sources while perpetuating the mistaken idea that the Keichō Embassy was an event exhibiting "little to do" with the flow of Japanese history.

Postwar scholars have produced multiple accounts of the embassy drawing on the relevant *DNS* volume and additional archival work. The works of Matsuda Kiichi and Gono Takashi in particular provide a fount of information on Japanese-Spanish relations and the path of the Keichō Embassy respectively.²⁰ However, they present accounts within a delineated Japanese history, less concerned with the interplay between Japan and broader histories. The full title of Matsuda's first (1969) monograph on the embassy is indicative of this perspective, titled *The Keichō Embassy: The First Japanese Crossing of the Pacific Ocean* (Keichō shisetsu: Nihonjin hatsu no Taiheiyō ōdan).²¹ Rather than presenting an account of a Japanese first, this dissertation asks what Japanese endeavors might contribute to our understanding of a regional or global whole.

¹⁹ *DNS* 12-12, Prefatory Note. The original is in English.

²⁰ See Matsuda Kiichi, *Keichō ken'ō shisetsu: Tokugawa Ieyasu to Nanbanjin* [*The Keichō Embassy to Europe: Tokugawa Ieyasu and the 'Southern Barbarians'*] (Tokyo: Chōbunsha, 1992), and Gono Takashi, *Hasekura Tsunenaga* (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kobunkan, 2003). The former work is one of the few to enfold Date Masamune's efforts within the larger Tokugawa project of outreach to Habsburg Spain. The dissertation draws extensively on both authors' work.

²¹ Matsuda, Kiichi, *Keichō shisetsu—Nihonjin hatsu no Taiheiyō ōdan* [*The Keichō Embassy—The First Japanese Crossing of the Pacific Ocean*] (Tokyo: Shin Jinbutsu Ōraisha, 1969).

The mission's exotic status garners consistent public and published attention within Japan. A museum in Ishinomaki City (historically a part of Date Masamune's Sendai domain) commemorates the Keichō Embassy, replete with animatronic figures, an immersive theatrical experience, and most impressively, a full-scale floating replica of Date's vessel, the *San Juan Bautista*, meticulously constructed in consultation with historical sources. The nearby Sendai City Museum houses the bulk of the embassy's material and documentary remains, including Hasekura's certificate of Roman citizenship, as well as portraits of the Japanese ambassador and Pope Paul V brought back to Japan by the former. The Japanese government designated forty-seven items National Treasures, while in 2013 UNESCO inscribed materials related to the embassy into its Memory of the World Register.²² Local scholars working with these materials have produced thoughtful studies of their history, while the museum has produced detailed catalogs and in 2010 collaborated in the publication of translated sources related to the embassy, augmenting the *DNS* volume from a century before.²³ Speculative histories have also cropped up, arguing for Date's conversion to Christianity, and for the embassy's (and by extension, Date's) secret purpose: Spanish aid in a planned coup against the Tokugawa shogunate.²⁴ This conjecture

²² For the latter, see "Materials Related to the Keicho-era Mission to Europe Japan and Spain," UNESCO, accessed March 20, 2017, <http://www.unesco.org/new/en/communication-and-information/memory-of-the-world/register/full-list-of-registered-heritage/registered-heritage-page-5/materials-related-to-the-keicho-era-mission-to-europe-japan-and-spain/>.

²³ Sendai-shi, *Sendai shishi. Tokubetsuhen 8: Keichō ken'ō shisetsu* [Sendai City History, Special Compilation 8: The Keichō Embassy to Europe] (Sendai: Sendai City, 2010). Hereafter abbreviated as *SDS*. Hirakawa Arata has recently published articles on the embassy. See, for example, "Rumors of Rebellion: Date Masamune and Tokugawa Ieyasu," *The Bulletin of the Tohoku Culture Research Room* 52 (2010), 1–20 (the article is in Japanese).

²⁴ Ōizumi Kōichi has maintained a version of this argument spanning multiple decades and multiple books. His translations of primary sources and archival work have been recognized by scholars such as Gono, though his main contention that Date sent the Keichō embassy to muster support for a coup against the Tokugawa has received much less support and scholarly consideration. Hirakawa, cited above, allows for Date's ambition but does not accept that formal military alliance was the primary purpose of the embassy. Though the Tokugawa-Date relationship is both fascinating and under-sourced, I have seen no direct evidence in support of Ōizumi's contentions, and provide a more cooperative account here. Ōizumi's latest works revisit the same themes for a popular audience with provocative titles such as *Date Masamune's Secret Messenger* (*Date Masamune no misshi* 2010), *Christian Shogun*

does not accord well with the sources or circumstances, but it does coincide with Date's rising profile as a character for pop-culture consumption across *anime*, *manga*, and video games set in fictionalized versions of Japan's Warring States, or Sengoku, period (1467–1603). The recent 400-year anniversary of the Keichō Embassy's 1613 departure, as well as the 2011 Tōhoku earthquake and tsunami, have also raised the national profile of Date, Hasekura, and the region both men inhabited.²⁵

Meanwhile, the study of early modern Japan's foreign relations marches on. The accepted wisdom of a "Christian Century" leading inexorably to isolation eroded in the 1980s. Tashiro Kazui rejected the notion of willful seclusion and emphasized Tokugawa efforts to carve out a role for itself independent of China's system of tributary relations.²⁶ Soon after, Ronald Toby penned the definitive monograph in English, underscoring Tokugawa efforts to establish a diplomatic framework within the context of East Asia rather than wondering at its dissociation from the West.²⁷

Subsequent studies proceed from the recognition that only a thoroughly Eurocentric historical gaze could equate the expulsion of the Iberian powers with a rejection of the world, and many understandably focus their attention elsewhere. Arano Yasunori continued the study of Japan's diplomatic role in East Asia, positing a "Japanocentric world order" (*Nihon gata ka'i*

Date Masamune (*Kirishitan shōgun Date Masamune*, 2013), and *Date Masamune's Conspiracy* (*Date Masamune no inbō* 2016), among others.

²⁵ "Tōhoku" (東北, literally "east north") refers to the northeastern region of Honshu, the largest island in the Japanese archipelago. Date's Sendai domain lay in the Tōhoku region.

²⁶ Kazui Tashiro, "Foreign Relations during the Edo Period: Sakoku Reexamined," trans. Susan Downing Videen, *Journal of Japanese Studies* 8, no. 2 (July 1982): 283–306.

²⁷ Ronald P Toby, *State and Diplomacy in Early Modern Japan: Asia in the Development of the Tokugawa Bakufu*, (Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 1984).

chitsujo) as the Tokugawa shogunate's operative diplomatic framework.²⁸ This conceptualization placed Japan in the center of a hierarchy of its own creation and for its own convenience, managing a series of bilateral relations through “four entrances” (*yottsu no kuchi*) to the archipelago: Satsuma domain (handling relations with Ryukyu), Tsushima domain (with Korea), Matsumae domain (with the Ainu people, living in present-day Hokkaido), and the port city of Nagasaki (with Dutch and Chinese merchants). Scholars in more recent decades typically focus on one or more of these “portals” into Japan.²⁹ Additional work on the overall character of Japan's diplomatic order continues in dialog with the parallel study of the nature and operation of domestic authority.³⁰ Thus scholarship has delved into the many relationships managed by a not-so-secluded country and shown how all of these fed into the building and maintenance of Japan's particular brand of diplomatic fiction, against the recognition that all diplomacy is a form of state-driven fiction.

The turn to Asia has not precluded further study of relations with the Dutch, the one European group that maintained a presence, however contained, in Tokugawa Japan.³¹ Recent work has explored the utility of the Dutch East India Company's (*Verenigde Oostindische*

²⁸ Arano Yasunori, “The Formation of a Japanocentric World Order,” *The International Journal of Asian Studies* 2, no. 2 (July 2005): 185–216.

²⁹ Kamiya Nobuyuki, *Ryukyu to Nihon, Chūgoku* [*Ryukyu and Japan, China*] (Tokyo: Yamakawa Shuppansha, 2003); Brett L. Walker, *The Conquest of Ainu Lands: Ecology and Culture in Japanese Expansion, 1590-1800* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001); Gregory Smits, *Visions of Ryukyu: Identity and Ideology in Early-Modern Thought and Politics* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1999); James Bryant Lewis, *Frontier Contact between Choson Korea and Tokugawa Japan* (New York: RoutledgeCurzon, 2003).

³⁰ Robert I. Hellyer, *Defining Engagement: Japan and Global Contexts, 1640-1868*, Harvard East Asian Monographs 326 (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Asia Center, 2009); Luke Shepherd Roberts, *Performing the Great Peace: Political Space and Open Secrets in Tokugawa Japan* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2012); David L. Howell, “Foreign Encounters and Informal Diplomacy in Early Modern Japan,” *The Journal of Japanese Studies* 40, no. 2 (July 19, 2014): 295–327, doi:10.1353/jjs.2014.0075.

³¹ Derek Massarella, *A World Elsewhere: Europe's Encounter with Japan in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990); Timon Screech, “The English and the Control of Christianity in the Early Edo Period,” *Japan Review*, no. 24 (January 1, 2012): 3–40, doi:10.2307/41592686.

Compagnie, or VOC) “service” to successive Tokugawa shoguns, making use of the voluminous records kept by VOC factories and operatives. In the realm of English-language scholarship, Adam Clulow has explored how the Tokugawa “tamed” the Dutch over the course of the seventeenth century, transforming company agents into vassals with concrete expectations of service and rigid control over their actions in Japan and in the waters far beyond.³²

An understandable focus on maintained relationships raises question about the potential contributions of studies on curtailed encounters. No longer burdened by the responsibility of establishing a paradigm of exclusion, Japan’s relations with Spain and Portugal remain underrepresented in recent literature. In the realm of diplomatic history, Juan Gil and Emilio Sola have authored Spanish-language works on Spain’s encounter with Japan. Gil in particular outlines events and peruses the documentary record, including valuable commentary on extended passages of primary sources.³³ However, both authors draw almost exclusively on Spanish-language material, and narrate an ill-fated relationship rather than analyzing its potential for instruction. Finally, scholars have begun to explore the role of Manila in early Tokugawa foreign relations, arguing for the importance of the Franciscan community in the pursuit and development of the archipelago’s commercial and diplomatic ties to Spain’s largest settlement in Asia.³⁴ Birgit Tremml-Werner provided one of the few recent works in English, outlining the triangular relationship of China, Japan, and Spain converging on that city during the height of

³² Adam Clulow, *The Company and the Shogun: The Dutch Encounter with Tokugawa Japan* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2014). For a recent work in Japanese, see Matsukata Fuyuko, *Oranda fūsetsugaki: ‘Sakoku’ Nihon ni katarareta ‘sekai’* [*Dutch Rumor Writings: The ‘World’ Narrated to the ‘Closed Country’ of Japan*] (Tokyo: Chuo Koron Shinsha, 2010).

³³ Juan Gil, *Hidalgos Y Samurais: España Y Japón En Los Siglos XVI Y XVII* (Madrid: Alianza Editorial, 1991); Emilio Sola, *Historia de Un Desencuentro: España Y Japón, 1580-1614* (Madrid: Fugaz Ediciones, 1999).

³⁴ Shimizu Yūko, *Kinsei Nihon to Ruson: “sakoku” keiseishi saikō* [*Early Modern Japan and Luson: Reconsidering the Historical Formation of the “Closed Country”*] (Tokyo: Tōkyōdō Shuppan, 2012).

cultural, economic, and political contact among all three. In delineating what she calls the “Manila System” operating from 1571 to 1644, the author forefronts the interplay between local conditions and global dynamics.³⁵

This dissertation contains elements of, and is influenced by, the above, but tells a different story. It cleaves Japanese-Spanish relations from incomplete narratives over-reliant on Christianity’s rise and fall in Japan, no longer in vogue but still in need of reassessment. It does not offer a “system,” as a work focused on inconsistent bilateral ties over a quarter century would reach too far if it reached for anything systematic. Instead, it examines a period of diplomatic and commercial outreach unburdened by the assumption that its collapse must be rooted in an inherent Japanese bent toward isolation. Rather than juxtaposing dispositions, it contrasts differing and changing priorities across the composite, hierarchical polities headed by the Tokugawa shogunate in Japan and the Habsburg monarchy in Spain.

This dissertation also demonstrates how halting and difficult global and globalizing contact could be. World history after 1500 often takes globalization as a core concept, and like many of our dearest concepts the word is easy to use but hard to define. Perhaps the latter is what enables the former; perhaps it is the other way around. Here I take “globalization” to signify intensification: of trade, of conflict, of industry, of exploitation, and most relevant here, of inter-societal encounter. Without doubt the world has “globalized” over the past five centuries, so much so that the process is assumed, and we often set the stage for world history against a backdrop of streamlined and inevitable intensification of contact. Those communities or societies that appear to buck the trend—such as Japan—become marked as outliers.

³⁵ Birgit Tremml, *Spain, China and Japan in Manila, 1571-1644 Local Comparisons and Global Connections* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2015).

But encounters can be trying to maintain. The fraught relationship between Japan and Spain demonstrates the challenges inherent to bridging distances political, conceptual, and geographic. The last should not be discounted or given mere token acknowledgement. The Spanish ambassador in London could write Philip III and expect a reply in three months. From Antwerp, the turnaround was but one to two months.³⁶ By contrast, a one-way voyage across the Pacific took three to four months if conditions held, and up to six if they did not.³⁷ The Spanish traversed the yawning distance between the Americas and Asia just once a year, meaning the governor-general in the Philippines wrote his king knowing a reply was at least two years away. Tokugawa Ieyasu waited five years before receiving a reply from Philip, and neither the wait nor the response pleased him.

Distance also shaped the endeavor of imposing institutional order. Layers of Spanish administrative hierarchy impeded Tokugawa efforts to find a suitable partner with which to pursue expanded relations. What started as a request to the governor-general in Manila became a policy debate for the king and his councilors half a world away. The politics of who to ask mirrored the politics of who could ask. The Tokugawa, recently established and exploring options, opened audience chambers and sea lanes to a host of foreigners at various levels of official authority. By contrast, the Spanish monarchy adopted more circumspect measures when evaluating the credentials of its Japanese interlocutors. When Date Masamune dispatched representatives to Spain, officials debated who he was and the related question of his standing as much as they considered his requests. However, distance is its own form of credibility, and

³⁶ Paul C. Allen, *Philip III and the Pax Hispanica, 1598-1621: The Failure of Grand Strategy* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000), 11.

³⁷ William Lytle Schurz, *The Manila Galleon* (New York: E.P. Dutton, 1939), 216–249.

Philip agreed to an audience with Date's representative. Nevertheless, the crown never treated Date or Hasekura as authorized to ask for what they wanted. Pacific commerce was a matter to be discussed between sovereigns, not subordinates. This conception hindered the Tokugawa dialog with the king's servants in the Philippines and undercut efforts by a Japanese daimyo when petitioning the Spanish crown.

Who might deliver a message became entangled with how it should be sent and delivered. The shogunate experimented with both the means of trade and the modes of encounter. Within the emerging Tokugawa framework of governance, space emerged for regional authority to mediate bilateral foreign relations. The arrangement grew out of established regional ties predating political unification under the Tokugawa. It lessened the potential for direct diplomatic insult, and bolstered the profit and prestige of the intermediary. However, the elasticity granted by this approach doubled as opacity. Tokugawa flexibility made Date's embassy possible, but the shogunate's public distance from the endeavor cast doubt on the mission in the eyes of administrators in New Spain and Europe. Moreover, the Tokugawa discourse was one of permission, offered quite freely for a time. Early on, all parties interested could trade in Japan so long as they went through the appropriate, shogunate-directed channels. By contrast, Spain pursued more direct and exclusive control of its imperial pathways and portals. Thus, while the Tokugawa operated permission structures undergirding a developing hierarchy, the Habsburgs confronted challenges to the logic of economic exclusivity. For Spain, opening the Pacific did not present an opportunity for expansion but a threat to control.

Attempts were made to assuage these challenges absent the aid of clear economic incentives. The Manila galleons facilitated the great exchange of Asian silk for American silver, actively pursued by merchants from Ming China and the Spanish Americas despite official

ambivalence. Japan maintained its own thirst for Chinese textiles, and acted as a major supplier of silver as well. Common exports made it difficult to find common ground, weakening the case for trade between silver-rich Japan and silver-rich New Spain. Moreover, Tokugawa incentives for trade—a need for political legitimacy at home, a base for foreign trade near the Tokugawa capital of Edo, a desire to import Spanish mining and navigational technology—stoked Spanish anxieties over the economy and effective governance of the Indies and control over the technologies that made that governance, however strained, possible. Individuals made the case for and against trade between Japan and the Americas for different reasons and in different ways, but the variety of opinions fueled uncertainty rather than encouraging experimentation among decision-makers in Spain. The absence of a clear commercial impetus increased the friction inhibiting connection across the Pacific.

This is the history of an aborted encounter, but Japanese-Spanish relations should not be treated as a dead-end, as has been the inclination of previous histories and narratives of the Keichō Embassy. We can read an abandoned encounter as an opportunity lost or gained. Earlier historiography of Japan's foreign relations adopted the former perspective, lamenting the archipelago's willful seclusion from other (Western) societies. Conversely, from Tashiro and Toby to the present, scholars argue that unwillingness to orbit the sinocentric order as a tributary satellite catalyzed the construction of the Tokugawa diplomatic order. "Open" and "closed" are descriptors that continue to define Japan for audiences foreign and domestic, despite scholars' longstanding efforts to distance themselves from these appellations and the narratives supporting them. To adopt the metaphor of grammar, we would do better to focus on verbs rather than adjectives, to reassess choices and actions without undue reliance on past characterizations. Whether "opened" or "closed" there has been little room for the era to be much else. Tokugawa

outreach to Spain exemplified a concentrated period of experimentation with and exploration of relationships as the shogunate decided the twin questions of foreign relations and domestic rule. Outside of the Philippines, Spain demurred from this outreach, unable to find any benefits outweighing the threat to its perceived prerogative. Having cast a wide net, the Tokugawa opted for alternate pathways, but only after giving dogged chase to trade across the North Pacific.

Communicating across Composite Hierarchies

Tokugawa and Habsburg leadership attempted to sustain dialog across conceptual and administrative systems premised on composite hierarchies, a term I use to describe both. Spain's composite monarchy (*monarchia compuesta*), presided over a complex assemblage of crowns and kingdoms in the Iberian Peninsula, extensive territories in Europe (including much of the Italian Peninsula and the Spanish Netherlands), and colonial possessions across the East and West Indies divided into multiple levels of administration.³⁸ The crown united these disparate holdings under the same ruler but not the same methods of rule, which differed within Europe and between Europe and the Indies.

I focus on the three-tiered administration flowing upward and eastward from Manila to Mexico to Madrid. A governor-general and *audiencia* oversaw secular executive and judicial administration in the Philippines, with the islands forming part of the Viceroyalty of New Spain. The Viceroy of New Spain reported to the king and his Royal and Supreme Council of Indies (*Real y Supremo Consejo de Indias*), the administrative body responsible for overseeing Spain's extra-European territories. The monarch's conceptual claim to rule and his place at the summit of authority was clear and direct in theory, even if reality and geography constrained Madrid's

³⁸ Historian J.H. Elliot coined the term "composite monarchy" to describe European polities in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. See Elliott, "A Europe of Composite Monarchies," *Past & Present*, no. 137 (1992): 48–71.

efficacy and day-to-day oversight. By 1600, the composite monarchy was a century into its tenure governing across oceans, including nearly forty years of activity in the Philippines. Though still expanding its effective territorial reach in the New World, Habsburg Spain sought to maintain, not establish, its political power and administrative control.³⁹

Tokugawa Japan was both composite and hierarchical, but along different lines. Over two hundred regional lords or daimyo ruled discrete areas of the archipelago, a century of strife and alliance deciding the borders among them. The Tokugawa shogun was first among these lords, invested with the title and nominal right to rule by the Japanese emperor.⁴⁰ The latter held little direct political power but remained a source of legitimacy. The Tokugawa and their direct retainers ruled roughly a quarter of the Japanese archipelago, the daimyo governing the rest with a great deal of autonomy. Many daimyo were either collateral branches (親藩, *shinpan*) or hereditary vassals (譜代, *fudai*) of the Tokugawa house, while the remainder were *tozama* (外様, “outsider”) daimyo who only swore allegiance to Ieyasu following the climactic battle of Sekigahara in 1600. Several *tozama* domains were located to the southwest, where foreign trade across the China Seas predated Japan’s political unification. The Tokugawa thus governed at the apex of a composite system but had not integrated the archipelago under its singular rule. Scholars of Japan have deemed this the *bakuhan taisei* (幕藩体制, “bakuhan system”), referencing the relationship between the shogunate, or *bakufu* (幕府), and daimyo domains, or

³⁹ For an overview of early modern Spain, see Henry Kamen, *Spain, 1469-1714: A Society of Conflict*, 3rd ed (Harlow, England ; New York: Pearson/Longman, 2005).

⁴⁰ “Shogun” is an abbreviation of the formal title *Sei-i taishōgun* (征夷大將軍), often translated as “Barbarian-Quelling Generalissimo.” It denoted military, not court, rank, though shogun and daimyo alike enjoyed court rank as well.

han (藩).⁴¹ In the early 1600s the system remained far from established, and memories of open conflict, competition and aspirant rule under clans other than the Tokugawa remained fresh.

During this unsettled time, foreign relations functioned as a sphere where the shogunate could assert itself. For the Tokugawa, prerogative in foreign trade and domestic self-definition were overlapping aspects of the same project. Leadership constructed a clear hierarchy abroad to justify the emerging one at home. This process of launching and regulating contacts with players throughout Asia played out precisely during the time in question here (1600–1625), as the Tokugawa moved unevenly toward a conceptual system of foreign trade and relations reinforcing the shogunate's purported pride of place in the region. Tokugawa ascension and conscious expansion thus overlapped with Habsburg efforts to maintain primacy at home and abroad.

The Tokugawa program of mediated access butted up against Spain's network of imperial pathways. The former welcomed as many partners as possible, as long as trade ran its course under Tokugawa sanction. The latter sought to maximize extraction through exclusive administrative and commercial channels, inevitably flowing toward the Iberian Peninsula. Both proved to be enduring but porous frameworks. Daimyo pursued their own agendas within but not necessarily in accordance with Tokugawa priorities. Smuggling and piracy continued, especially throughout the overextended Spanish empire. The Philippines embodied the limits of effective control. Rule of the islands followed the logic of colonial and evangelical labor, but economic survival depended on trade with foreign powers and merchants the Spanish metropole had very little influence over. These circumstances produced ongoing debates about the role of the islands within the empire during this time and beyond. However, once Asian goods entered the Spanish

⁴¹ John Whitney Hall and James L. McClain, "The Bakuhan System," in *The Cambridge History of Japan*, by James L. McClain, ed. John Whitney Hall (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 128–82.

orbit in Manila they followed a clearly demarcated path eastward to the Americas and Europe under Spanish control. This arrangement permitted Japanese ports and a Spanish settlement to trade without the respective sovereigns of each needing to acknowledge one other. The Tokugawa complicated this picture when they pursued trade with New Spain, initiating a conversation neither polity's political apex could sustain through existing frameworks.

An eclectic group of men tried to bridge the gap. A shipwrecked governor-general with dreams of ambassadors and unrealistic mineral-sharing arrangements. A general charged with searching for islands that did not exist. An opportunistic daimyo with an interest in the wider world looking for new economic opportunities. A friar convinced of the potential of the Japan Mission and confident of his ability to lead it. A minor vassal and son of a recently disgraced house with some experience in domestic political matters. All operated in an ambiguous space between hegemonies with conflicting priorities, and none of them succeeded in gaining the trust of both. These intermediaries variably praised a foreign god, extolled the virtues of a pagan people, denounced one another, claimed sanction they did not possess, and at times remained conspicuously silent. Their collective efforts animated much of the encounter between Tokugawa Japan and Habsburg Spain; their choices, demands, and aspirations also did much to undermine a connection that was fragile from the start. They remind us that inter-polity relations hinge on individual encounters. The shorthand "Japanese-Spanish relations" masks the internal political dynamics in Japan and subsumes the different nodes of the Spanish empire. The term also draws attention away from the nebula of individuals moving through these spaces. In the absence of agreed-upon protocols, reliable communication, and clear economic incentives, personality and personal ambition found yet more room in which to operate. My study explores the role intermediaries played in defining the tenor and potential of inter-polity relations.

Finally, Tokugawa Japan's encounter with Spain challenges our assumptions about the development of the Pacific as a commercial and diplomatic space. For brevity, I often refer to "the Pacific" when the "North Pacific" or a similar appellation is more accurate. Japanese outreach in the early seventeenth century complicates our understanding of the (North) Pacific as a Spanish lake. The Tokugawa made the first attempt to establish bilateral commercial ties across the world's largest "lake." Japan also pursued a relationship for which there was then no template: reciprocal trade between an Asian and European polity where the latter did not function as a conduit for Asian wares.⁴² Manila complicates this picture, as a Spanish territory whose primary purpose was trade with Asia. But it also proves the import of Japan's outreach: once the Tokugawa attempted to trade with a Spanish territory whose sole purpose was not trade in Asian goods, the monarchy reacted defensively. Ultimately, Spain closed off the Eastern Pacific to Japanese outreach; soon after, Japan severed its connection with the Philippines in the Western Pacific. This directional inversion—Spain guarding the east, Japan pursuing less troublesome partners in the west—parallels the inversion of expected societal roles, where Europeans expand outward and Asian powers opt for isolation. The inversion also reminds us that historical actors do not always conform to the roles we give them.

Chapter Organization

Chapter 1, "Sailing East," explores the initial Tokugawa endeavor to turn the potential of trade with New Spain into a reality. These efforts were consistent, persistent, and part of the broader goal of attracting foreign trade to eastern Japan. The bulk of existing trade flowed

⁴² This statement glides over the colonial status of the Americas, which complicates the notion of a "European polity" active in trade. I argue that the settler colonialism of the Spanish Americas differs from the enclave/factory network of early European colonialism in Asia, such that trade between Japan and New Spain operated as "direct" trade between Japan and Spain in a way that exchange between Japan and Dutch Batavia did not.

through Kyushu ports in Japan's southwest; Pacific trade with New Spain offered the possibility of foreign commerce farther to the northeast, nearer the center of Tokugawa power. While Ieyasu (d. 1616) lived, the Tokugawa pursued relations with Spain more assertively than with any other European community and most other partners as well, a fact underappreciated today. The Spanish were one of the few to resist Japanese outreach at this time.⁴³ Ieyasu moved through concentric circles of Spanish authority to get what he wanted, corresponding with the Philippines before dispatching a ship to New Spain in 1610 with a trading license issued to Philip III's court in Madrid. The shogunate's interactions with its various Spanish interlocutors produced mixed results. The viceroy of New Spain sent an ambassador to Japan in response to Ieyasu's vessel, authorized to offer thanks and request permission to survey the coast but little else.

Tokugawa dissatisfaction with the lack of diplomatic progress, combined with the loss of a second ship bound for New Spain, opened the way for the northern daimyo Date Masamune to insert himself into the proceedings. With Tokugawa sanction, Date sent his own embassy in 1613 on the *San Juan Bautista*, the largest ship yet to depart Japan for New Spain. The arrangement established Date as a diplomatic player in his own right, albeit under Tokugawa auspices. It paralleled existing intermediary positions occupied by other daimyo, but preserved the Tokugawa goal of attracting foreign trade to northeastern Japan. Date's gambit suggests one path by which individual daimyo might better their situation within a domestic political hierarchy headed by the recently-ascendant Tokugawa. Unfortunately, Date's outreach, meant to provide a more flexible and nimble response to Spain, blurred the lines of authority for the party's Spanish hosts in the Americas and in Europe.

⁴³ Resistance came from the most important potential trading and diplomatic partner of all, China. Tokugawa Japan traded extensively with private Chinese merchants for over two centuries, but never established formal relations with either the Ming (1368–1644) or Qing (1644–1912) courts.

Chapter 2, “Confounding the Court,” analyzes the Keichō Embassy’s struggle to achieve the diplomatic standing required to petition the Spanish monarchy effectively. Franciscan friar Luis Sotelo emerges here (and throughout) as the key figure and voice of the embassy away from Japan. Sotelo initially tried to serve the mission’s ends by distinguishing himself from it, claiming to represent the Tokugawa directly while escorting Date’s chief Japanese representative Hasekura Tsunenaga. By grafting himself to Japan’s recognized central authority, Sotelo sought a stronger position from which to petition the Spanish crown. However, the friar’s detractors, Date’s letters, and Sotelo’s own actions told a different story. The muddled picture that resulted undercut Spanish trust in the “King of Ōshū” (Date) and raised lasting doubts about the “Emperor of Japan’s” (Ieyasu’s) sanction of the enterprise. Additionally, the *San Juan Bautista*’s unbidden, unwelcome arrival in Acapulco provoked Spanish anxiety about Japanese maritime and commercial encroachment. The combination of the ship’s arrival and its passengers’ mixed messages shaped Philip III’s long-awaited reply to Ieyasu. The monarchy ruled against any commercial traffic between New Spain and Japan, even as Sotelo and Hasekura arrived in Madrid to petition on behalf of the “king” rather than the “emperor.” Philip’s reply to Ieyasu offered little beyond token goodwill, and marked his only direct correspondence with the Tokugawa even as Date’s embassy started a conversation of its own in Europe.

Chapter 3, “Submitting to Orders,” tracks parallel developments in Spain and Japan, examining the fraught relations between diplomatic parties and their hosts. In Catholic Europe, Sotelo embraced the rhetoric of piety once it became clear that the party lacked the political standing to achieve its ends. Piety played well, as both Philip in Madrid and Pope Paul V in Rome embraced the optics of sponsorship and religious patronage. Philip witnessed Hasekura’s baptism in Madrid early in 1615, and overruled his own council by allowing Hasekura and

Sotelo to travel to the Eternal City. Hasekura's symbolic and ceremonial entrance into Rome as a pilgrim from afar marked the high point of the embassy. However, devotion and submission to Catholic authorities did not secure secular concessions, and Spain's diplomatic network ensured that the papacy did not grant any requests the crown did not condone.

Meanwhile in Japan, the optics of enforcement, not patronage, were in play. Philip's representatives—three friars—handed Ieyasu a reply that pointedly did not touch on the matter of trade, but did request protections for Christian missionaries two years after the Tokugawa had ordered their expulsion. Philip had offered nothing, thus leaving little to discuss. Ieyasu died soon after meeting the party from Spain, and his son had less patience. Tokugawa Hidetada (1579–1632) refused an audience and returned all of the gifts earlier presented to his father. Following this cold reception the *San Juan Bautista* departed once more for New Spain in order to be rid of Philip's envoys and retrieve Date's.

Chapter 4, "The Gate Ajar," examines the practical steps officials in New Spain took to close off the Eastern Pacific to Japanese commerce while protecting the Philippines' trade with Japan. A customs dispute in Acapulco involving the *San Juan Bautista* highlighted the intra- and inter-societal tensions framing debates about how best to structure relations between Japan and outposts of the Spanish empire. The viceroy of New Spain initially ordered the *Bautista* to pay customs at the same rate levied against goods imported from Manila. The Japanese contingent, represented by Sotelo and Hasekura, protested the decision. Surprisingly, representatives of the Spanish Philippines joined them, fearing crippling retaliatory tariffs by the Japanese in Manila. The viceroyalty reversed its original decision and granted the *Bautista* permission to trade tax-free, but it also took steps to ensure no other Japanese ship would call on Acapulco in the future. These measures determining the who, where, and how of trade parallel steps taken by the

Tokugawa in later decades, and demonstrate that Japan did not possess a monopoly on closure or control. They also brought an end to the most concerted effort by any polity to sustain bilateral trade across the Pacific prior to the nineteenth century.

The final chapter, “Lost at Sea,” chronicles the end of Japanese-Spanish ties in the Western Pacific following Spain’s successful efforts to close the eastern seaboard. Japan had pursued diplomacy across concentric rings of Spanish imperial authority; the unraveling similarly rippled across multiple locales. The Keichō Embassy came to an anticlimactic ending. Following a delay in the islands, Hasekura returned to his lord in 1620 with portraits, gifts, and strange tales, but little more. Sotelo mounted an ill-advised return to Japan, only to be imprisoned and executed in Kyushu. With peninsular Spain and New Spain uninterested, final diplomatic overtures came from the Philippines, but by 1625 the shogunate had washed its hands of Spain’s inflexible demands and its minimal interest in meeting Japan’s own. Thus the thwarted potential of Japan’s relationship with New Spain injured the real commercial link active between the islands and the archipelago. Ieyasu’s successors contented themselves with ensuring adequate—though never complete—oversight of foreign trade to the south, west, and north, abandoning any such enclave in the east. The end of Pacific trade ensured that the centers of Japanese domestic political power and foreign trade remained at a distance from each other. The Tokugawa relationship with Spain developed and deteriorated more rapidly than with almost any other community, and the Spanish were the first—of but two—groups excluded from the archipelago. Yet this severance came a half-dozen years after Spain closed off the Americas.

A brief conclusion discusses the rediscovery of the Keichō Embassy in the nineteenth century by another famous Japanese mission abroad, as well as the place of the Keichō Embassy today. Museums, books, symposia, and public events present Date’s embassy specifically, and in

isolation, as a model of engagement for a country again reassessing its global role and relationships in the twenty-first century. The assignation of a doomed foresight allows Date and Hasekura to achieve their salience as symbols of intrepid encounter. Both men are depicted as ahead of their time, and thus victims of it. The West's willingness to engage is unassailable and assumed in these conceptions, which reinforce the need for Japan to once again "open up." The flipside of making Date and Hasekura ahead of their time is that Japan's history must remain behind.

1. Sailing East: Tokugawa Diplomatic Outreach 1600–1613

First Contact, Ten Years in the Making

Addressing the Duke of Lerma, of Spain,

The matter of black ships (*kurofune*) crossing from New Spain to Japan has been passed along to the former lord (*kokushu*) of Luzon. [The ships may] make landing at any port in Japan, and there will not be even the slightest reservation [in receiving them]. This padre, Fray Luis Sotelo, can speak of the particulars.

Keichō year 14, 12th month, 28th day [1610.1.22]

(seal of Ieyasu)¹

So reads the full text of Tokugawa Ieyasu's first and only letter to the court of Philip III of Spain. Concise and reserved as always, Ieyasu left much unsaid. The Tokugawa hegemon made no mention of his decade-long effort to integrate Japan directly into Spain's Pacific commerce. Similarly, though "black ships crossing from New Spain to Japan" indicated trade, Ieyasu omitted mention of any specific imports or exports he hoped might sustain that trade. Nor did he request that New Spain (present-day Mexico) dispatch the empire's experts in mining technologies, navigation, or shipbuilding, all matters that had been points of conversation and contention with Spanish officials in Manila and Japan. Finally, Ieyasu demurred from explaining the "former lord of Luzon's" presence in Japan, or his apparent relevance to the matter at hand. Fray Luis Sotelo would have many details to cover, had he made the journey. But Sotelo's tenure as a diplomatic agent took a meandering path, as we shall see.

¹ AGI,MP-ESCRITURA_CIFRA,30. Accesible online via the Portal de Archivos Españoles (PARES), <http://pares.mcu.es> (accessed March 25, 2017). An annotated print version is also available in Murakami Naojirō, ed., *Ikoku ōfuku shokanshū* (Tokyo: Sunnansha, 1929), 93-94 (doc. 32).

The present chapter delineates Japanese efforts to engage with the Spanish Empire across the Pacific, and analyzes the Tokugawa shogunate's approach to doing so. Ieyasu's ambitions for trans-Pacific commerce culminated with Date Masamune's 1613 embassy, the final iteration of a decade of experimentation bent on opening New Spain to Japan. The archipelago's relationship with Spain was never the most important connection, but in terms of effort, outlay, and vision, the pursuit may have been the shogunate's most ambitious. After all, Ieyasu was attempting to open an ocean. The pages that follow trace the evolving approaches to several interrelated questions: who should front the engagement with New Spain; how best to navigate the layers of Spain's imperial administration; whom to appoint and trust as a representative; what was worth writing, and how to initiate a relationship between Tokugawa Japan and Habsburg Spain while skirting the issue of how shogun and monarch should relate to each other. Maintaining conversations over layers of authority across an ocean proved a formidable challenge. From the beginning, Spanish officialdom adopted a guarded, cautious stance, trying to protect its prerogatives in an empire that stretched effective administrative capacity. Conversely, a Tokugawa regime new to the political and diplomatic stage moved nimbly to pursue its developing interests. Tokugawa experiments with the form, function and scale of diplomacy turned into the only attempt, outside of an expressly imperial or colonial context, to establish a trans-Pacific relationship prior to the nineteenth century.

The text of Ieyasu's letter and the context of its dispatch suggest a great deal about how the Tokugawa shogunate pursued relations with Habsburg Spain, a political and commercial presence in Asia but a diplomatic unknown. Above all, the letter functioned as much as a license as it did as diplomatic correspondence. Ieyasu stated and declared; he did not ask or request. The document's implied petition—that Spanish ships from New Spain be sent to Japan—was buried

as a “matter...passed along,” thereby evading any language of permission. Ieyasu paid no homage. Just how the two polities might structure their relations or establish relative rank remained vague, a matter that plagued subsequent diplomatic efforts. Technically, Ieyasu did not write the king himself, opting to write instead to the king’s favorite at court, or *privado*, the Duke of Lerma.² Addressing Lerma made it easier to obfuscate the delicate issue of title and the implied hierarchies contained therein, a quandary that vexed the shogunate on multiple diplomatic fronts during this time.³ In writing Lerma, Ieyasu also demonstrated a basic grasp of Habsburg court politics and political institutions. The reference to the “former Lord of Luzon” (前呂宋国主, *zen Ruson kokushu*) suggested knowledge of the Spanish empire’s administrative system as well one potential source of such knowledge. This “lord” (国主, *kokushu*) referred to the outgoing interim Governor-General of the Philippines, Rodrigo de Vivero, who shipwrecked off the coast of present-day Chiba in 1609 on the return voyage from the Philippines to New Spain.⁴ Noting his status as a “former lord,” Ieyasu understood the appointed nature of Vivero’s office, and in turn, the need to deal with the authority conferring such appointments.

Less was more. Lean prose and sparse phrasing defined the letter, and Ieyasu provided little context. Vivero’s unexpected arrival catalyzed the shogunate’s outreach, and Ieyasu’s brief remarks belie the considerable effort the shogunate invested in delivering the letter. Most notably, the letter was not the only delivery. The Viceroyalty of New Spain had thought Vivero

² The address reads ゑすはんや・とふけい・てい・れるま to render the Spanish *España Duque de Lerma*.

³ In negotiating the reopening of relations with Joseon for Korea, for example, the shogunate ultimately adopted the neologism *taikun* (大君) to avoid the hierarchical implications of titles associated with Chinese diplomatic relations. See Kamiya Nobuyuki, *Taikun gaikō to Higashi Ajia* (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 1997), and in English, Ronald Toby, *State and Diplomacy in Early Modern Japan* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984).

⁴ Vivero’s time in Japan is discussed in more detail below.

lost, and returning the “Lord of Luzon” unharmed demonstrated the shogunate’s good faith and intentions. A cargo hold full of goods also accompanied lord and letter, supervised by Japanese merchants trying their hand in the American market. The merchants’ presence made it clear what type of relationship Ieyasu envisaged and how he proposed to pursue it, even prior to obtaining official approval. The means of delivery doubled as a declaration.

Ieyasu returned Vivero and sent his letter via the archipelago’s first vessel outfitted for a trans-Pacific crossing. Commissioned by the shogunate, designed by the Englishman Will Adams (1564–1620), and constructed in Japan, today the 120-ton vessel is known by its Spanish name: *San Buena Ventura*.⁵ In requesting *kurofune* from New Spain, Ieyasu had dispatched a “black ship” of his own. The vessel sent the clearest message of all, declaring Japanese interest in opening the waterways of the Pacific to its own shipping, thereby ending the Spanish monopoly on the only commercial route between the Americas and Asia. The Viceroy of New Spain welcomed Vivero, his nephew by marriage, but met the vessel with considerably less cheer.⁶

Sending a clipped message protected the shogunate from overextension or embarrassment, but it also necessitated delegating a great deal of responsibility, and placing a great deal of trust, in the messenger. This was all the more true when corresponding with a polity that possessed no knowledge of Classical Chinese, the *lingua franca* of East Asian diplomacy. A letter to Joseon Korea or the polities of Vietnam would be read by the recipients, but a letter to

⁵ The three Japanese vessels intended for trans-Pacific voyages are known today by their Spanish names, reflecting the presence of the Spanish speakers who helped construct and sail them to their destinations. Japanese records most often called European galleons *kurofune* (黒船), and extended the practice also to the few galleons constructed in Japan. Will Adams was an advisor to Ieyasu who appears in the records of Japanese and Europeans alike. On the *San Buena Ventura*, see Gonoï Takashi, *Hasekura Tsunenaga* (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 2003), 32.

⁶ The viceroy at the time was Luis Velasco, Marqués de Salinas. Salinas returned to Spain in 1611, and advised the monarchy as the head of the Council of the Indies, thus debating the response to Japan.

Spain required translation, and trust in the translators.⁷ It is fitting that the only concrete detail Ieyasu provided in his letter was the name of the man to be entrusted with all others: the Franciscan friar Luis Sotelo.

The choice of representative followed existing precedent and made sense logistically, but still gives pause. Successive generations of political leadership in Japan had made use of Buddhist monks to draft their foreign correspondence and to head missions to China and other locales.⁸ A literate Catholic missionary fulfilled an analogous role for any outreach to the Spanish monarchy, and the archipelago's resident missionary population was the best equipped to travel between the political leadership of the shogunate and the empire. Unlike earlier prominent missionaries, Sotelo came with the added benefit of being a Castilian and native of Seville, peninsular Spain's terminus for all trade with the Indies.⁹

However, the role of missionaries and the scope of their evangelical mission concerned Japanese leadership even prior to Tokugawa ascension in 1600.¹⁰ Catholic missionaries answered to a "higher" authority, raising doubts as to the loyalty of their growing flock at a time when a new regime was in the process of asserting, defining, and protecting recently-won political

⁷ Ieyasu had his scribes write to Lerma in *sōrōbun* (epistolary Japanese) rather than classical Chinese, though the shogunate used the latter in contact with Manila. Classical Chinese would have been legible to the Chinese merchant community in the Philippines, though it is unclear if that fact influenced the shogunate's choice of writing.

⁸ The role of monks in Japan's commercial and diplomatic relations with Asia is discussed in Charlotte von Verschuer, *Across the Perilous Sea: Japanese Trade with China and Korea from the Seventh to the Sixteenth Centuries* (Ithaca: Cornell University, 2006). See as well von Verschuer's article "Ashikaga Yoshimitsu's Foreign Policy 1398 to 1408 A.D.: A Translation from 'Zenrin Kokuhōki,' the Cambridge Manuscript," *Monumenta Nipponica* 62 (2007): 261–97.

⁹ Francis Xavier was from the present-day Basque Country—ruled by Spain but considered separate from the crown of Castile; Alessandro Valignano was Italian; and both Luis Frois and Joao Rodrigues were Portuguese.

¹⁰ Toyotomi Hideyoshi issued an edict prohibiting Christianity in 1587. Tokugawa Ieyasu announced his own in 1614. These developments will be discussed in more detail below.

prerogatives.¹¹ The nature of the project and the distance involved guaranteed that envoys would represent Tokugawa interests for multiple years while abroad. The choice demonstrated a continued reliance on and trust in missionaries' expertise in foreign relations at a time when the shogunate was ambivalent about their role in Japan.¹² As long as Japan's central leadership remained committed to commerce with the Spanish empire, it could find common ground with sympathetic missionaries who saw commercial relations as a pathway to spiritual dividends. It chose specifically to rely on Franciscans, who were the religious order most active in both the Philippines and New Spain, and who used Manila as a staging ground for their mission in Japan.¹³ In time, both Japan and Spain would come to question the trustworthiness of the intermediaries traveling between them.

Finally, it is worth noting that the Tokugawa shogunate reached out directly rather than through an intermediary. Ieyasu welcomed the black ships of New Spain to any port in Japan, and thereby asserted suzerainty over the entirety of the archipelago. The Spanish could disembark anywhere, but wherever they disembarked would be a Tokugawa port. This geographical blank check was but part of the shogunate's evolving system of relations, a system in which the Tokugawa also established direct control over certain locales while outsourcing specific bilateral ties to well-placed daimyo. In 1610, Satsuma domain was serving as the portal

¹¹ C.R. Boxer estimated that the Japanese Christian population reached 250,000–300,000 in the early seventeenth century. See his *The Christian Century in Japan: 1549–1650* (Berkeley: University of California Press 1951), 320–21.

¹² Sotelo's replacement was also a Spanish Franciscan missionary, Alonso Muñoz. As discussed later, the change occurred either due to illness or the objections of other missionaries in Japan, not because of Tokugawa displeasure.

¹³ The Jesuits, though active in the Philippines, traditionally ventured to Japan from Macao, i.e. via the Portuguese empire. Rivalry between Jesuits and the Franciscans mirrored the commercial tension between Macao and Manila, and by extension, the Portuguese and Spanish empires. Dominicans and Augustinians were also active in Japan, albeit on a lesser scale. C.R. Boxer's *The Christian Century* remains a readable overview of the growth of various Japan missions and the intrigue surrounding them. See also Michael Cooper, *They Came to Japan: An Anthology of European Reports on Japan, 1543-1640* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1965).

to Ryukyu; Tsushima domain continued to mediate the resumption of ties with Joseon Korea; the Matsumae administered trade and contact with the hunter-gatherer population of Ezo (present-day Hokkaido); and the Dutch East India Company (VOC) had just established a commercial outpost on the island of Hirado. For its part, the shogunate directly managed the important port of Nagasaki and the trade conducted there by Chinese and Portuguese merchants, among others. It further oversaw the important domestic port of Sakai, linking the imperial capital of Kyoto to the Inland Sea.¹⁴ None of these locales were close to the shogunate's base of power at Edo on the Kantō Plain, and over the previous decade the shogunate had unsuccessfully encouraged the Spanish, Dutch, and English to drop anchor nearer its rapidly-growing capital. In contrast, Ieyasu's 1610 overture came with no such strings, and with no proposed mediator, yet.

The Potential of (New) Spain

This year the Lord Daifu writes to Your Lordship in response to the letter you sent him last year.

Many ships from Japan have come to your land, and [you] the lord governor do not like that so many go; I would know the reason for this. [If] Your Lordship indicates the [number of] ships that you want to go, only those will go, carrying the 'chapa' of the emperor. Those that do not carry [a chapa] should not be received.

The Lord Daifu always writes to Your Lordship [asking if] you have sent a request for the trade of New Spain [with Japan], but you have never responded to him [regarding this matter], which is most lamentable. Your Lordship will inform him whether or not it

¹⁴ At the time, the city was also called Miyako (都, "the capital"), but for convenience's sake I refer to the city as "Kyoto" throughout.

is possible, because he will take great pleasure in knowing it, with which the ports and the sea will be much safer from thieves. The sixth day of the tenth month of the sixth year of the Lord Daifu. Your Lordship will respond to me.

—Nagasaki Bugyō Terasawa Hirotaka to the Governor-General of the Philippines, 1601¹⁵

Potential defined the Tokugawa relationship with Spain: potential for trade, for conflict, and for cooperation. Ieyasu pursued a campaign of consistent outreach, but consistently reaped only frustration. The Tokugawa hegemon regularly corresponded with the Governor-General of the Philippines from 1600 through 1610, as did proxies such as Tokugawa Hidetada and shogunate officials like Terasawa.¹⁶ Various Kyushu daimyo also exchanged letters with secular and religious officials in Manila.¹⁷ Just as importantly, the Philippines became one of the most common destinations for ships sailing under Tokugawa permission and protection after Ieyasu established the *shuin* (red-seal) system of licensed trade. The Portuguese carrack out of Macao continued to import large quantities of silk to Japan, but Manila served as an important additional source of Chinese silk. Furthermore, relations with the New Spain might offer Tokugawa leadership commercial expansion on a level the Portuguese could not match, and bring trade to areas of Japan under direct Tokugawa control.

¹⁵ “Copia de carta de Tarazaua Ximono Cami,” AGI,FILIPINAS,19,R.3,N.36. My translation from the Spanish original. The translator muddles the date and ruler. 1601 corresponds to the sixth year of the Keichō Era, while “Daifu” refers to Ieyasu. One was not named for the other, nor had Ieyasu been in power for six years. The original Japanese is lost, but a Japanese rendering of the AGI manuscript can be found in Murakami Naojiro, *Ikoku ōfuku shokanshū* (1929), doc. 28. AGI gives the year as 1602, the date of the translation, but not the original letter.

¹⁶ Many of these letters have been published in Murakami, *Ikoku ōfuku shokanshū*.

¹⁷ The Matsuura of Hirado and Nabeshima of Saga both corresponded with the Philippines. For examples, see Murakami, *Ikoku ōfuku*, docs. 9, 18, and 40.

When it came to Tokugawa efforts, outlay, and expectations, Spain occupied pride of place among the *nanbanjin* (南蛮人, “southern Barbarians”). Relations with the Dutch bookended this first decade of Tokugawa self-definition and experimentation in commerce and diplomacy, but contact with the nodes of the Habsburg Spanish Empire helped define it. Tokugawa-VOC relations rightly command scholarly and popular attention as Japan’s most durable connection to the opposite end of Eurasia, and as a case study in the fictions, compromises, and conflicts that undergirded relations between early-modern polities across political traditions. However, the VOC established itself as a credible, reliable trading presence in Japan through a long, haphazard process. The English did not set up a factory in Japan until 1613, but the English East India Company left Japan of its own accord in 1623, unable to turn a profit in the archipelago without ready access to Chinese silk or American silver. The Portuguese trade was important but established, and established far away from the Tokugawa power base in Edo. Against this backdrop, the Spanish in Manila were close, hosted a reliable population of Chinese merchants and their silk, posed no direct military threat, and offered additional markets in America and trade involving northeastern Japan. Ieyasu thus focused on efforts to increase ties to the Spanish, and pursued this relationship the most consistently and aggressively of any of his encounters with European communities.

However, treating Japan’s relations with Spain solely in the context of the country’s encounter with the West is insufficient; the Spanish also belong squarely in the context of Japan’s relations with East Asia.¹⁸ The Habsburg dynasty predated the Tokugawa as a political

¹⁸ The same contextual shift applies to the Portuguese, Dutch, and English. Though the Japanese distinguished between *nanbanjin* (南蛮人) and established East and Southeast Asian actors, the appellation tracked little with contemporary conceptions of the “West.” Before Europeans were western they were southern, as all of them approached the Japanese archipelago from the south.

actor in Asia by more than three decades, even if population, geography, and history made “Japan” the more formidable, stable power. In terms of consistent effort, outlay, and interest, Tokugawa outreach to the Spanish paralleled contemporary diplomatic outreach to Joseon Korea and Ming China in the wake of Hideyoshi’s disastrous invasions of the Korean peninsula. In 1607, the first of three “Reply and Prisoner Repatriation Envoys” arrived in Japan from Korea, before relations completely normalized through the “communication envoys” (通信使, Jp. *tsūshinshi*, K. *tongsinsa*) of the following two centuries.¹⁹ Formal contact with the Joseon dynasty outside of a Chinese framework granted Japan access to goods and information from the Asian mainland while bolstering Tokugawa claims to diplomatic independence. This diplomatic success helped cushion the fallout from the shogunate’s inability to establish formal relations with Ming China on favorable terms. Efforts towards a Ming rapprochement persisted throughout Ieyasu’s lifetime and continued after his death; only in 1621 did Hidetada finally turn away from the Ming court, a major step in consolidating an alternative Japanese diplomatic hierarchy with the Tokugawa shogunate at its center.²⁰

“Success” with Korea and “failure” with China are both instructive in an examination of relations with Spain. All three involved consistent, multi-year (sometimes multi-decade) efforts to achieve Tokugawa commercial and diplomatic goals. These goals varied: expanding trade to new parts of Japan (Spain), normalizing diplomatic relations with a nearby neighbor (Korea), and rejoining the paradigmatic system of foreign relations in East Asia and direct access to its largest market (China). Bundled together, all three served to stabilize commerce and diplomacy

¹⁹ See James Lewis, *Frontier Contact between Choson Korea and Tokugawa Japan* (New York: Routledge, 2003).

²⁰ Toby, *State and Diplomacy*, 62–64. See also Tashiro Kazui, “Foreign Relations during the Edo Period: Sakoku Reexamined,” *Journal of Japanese Studies* 2 (1982), 283–306, and Arano Yasunori, “The Formation of a Japanocentric World Order,” *International Journal of Asian Studies* 2 (2005), 185–216.

under the Tokugawa banner, reinforcing Ieyasu's claims to domestic authority and access to resources, wealth, and information attendant on trade.

Japan's "failure" to secure official ties with Ming China has become a cornerstone of the academic work outlining the evolution of a Tokugawa "world order" and evaluating its achievement. Exclusion from China's tributary hierarchy spurred the creation of the diplomatic framework attendant upon Pax Tokugawa for over two centuries. The collapse of the Ming in the seventeenth century seems further to validate the Tokugawa path of independence and experimentation well after the fact. In contrast, inability to establish lasting ties with Spain is entwined with the flip-side of Tokugawa independence: Japan's supposed seclusion, and the forced exclusion of Catholic Europe from the archipelago's shores. Yet, as this chapter (and indeed, the entire dissertation) argues, in order to understand Japan's turn away from Spain properly, we must examine the assertive, multi-pronged engagement with the Spanish empire that preceded it. Habsburg Spain never assumed the significance of Ming China, whether in terms of commercial importance or diplomatic legitimacy, but relations with Spain demonstrate both the breadth of the early Tokugawa vision and the limits of its capacity and willingness to expand when confronting weary, obfuscating interlocutors.

In contrast, the successful resumption of relations with Korea informs our understanding of how the Tokugawa navigated the inherent dissonance of a functionally equal (or at least equivalent) bilateral relationship within a hierarchical diplomatic framework. Rapprochement succeeded through the opportunistic actions of the Tokugawa's chosen mediators, the Sō clan of Tsushima. Sō forgery of select titles and documents passed between the shogunate and the Joseon court papered over continued differences of protocol. Ieyasu eventually learned of the deception, but given the benefits of smoother relations, opted for light punishments.

The most common intermediaries between the shogunate and the Spanish were missionaries, who were also not above manipulating the ambiguities present in the documents they carried and often helped translate. As we shall see, however, in the case of the daimyo Date Masamune's eventual mission to Spain, ambiguities regarding the mission's true sponsor and goals gave Fray Luis Sotelo less, not more, room in which to operate. Similarly, Korea and Japan's willingness to skirt the issue of hierarchy for mutual gain contrasts with the inability of the Tokugawa and Habsburgs to navigate each other's diplomatic logics, commercial interests, and political motivations, if only to agree to ignore the same sensitive issues.

The shogunate's commercial contact with the Spanish Philippines during this first decade stalemated: Tokugawa requests for more trade farther north butted against Spanish hesitancy and equivocation. Trade with New Spain loomed in the background; Ieyasu and his proxies inquired, and successive governors-general demurred. Nagasaki magistrate Terasawa's early letter and its reply laid bare those dynamics.

From the onset, Manila and Edo differed on what constituted a desirable volume of trade. Both sides sought restriction, albeit for dissimilar reasons. The Tokugawa worked to exclude trade outside its sanction, but did not yet aggressively curtail the volume of trade conducted under its purview. Conversely, Manila sought to limit trade volume and curb the growth of the Asian merchant populations supporting it. Chinese and Japanese traders vastly outnumbered their Spanish counterparts and the city's garrison, a fact that put the Spanish perpetually on edge in their own city. Thus, the shogunate sought to manage trade while the Spanish Philippines endeavored to set and enforce limits.²¹ Terasawa's initial framing of the *shuin* trade system

²¹ I do not suggest that Manila's Spanish population avoided trade or profit. Rather, it feared losing control of its own settlement and grew uneasy at the swelling numbers of Chinese and Japanese residents in and around the city. Concern about the number of Japanese present in Japan continued well into the next decade. In 1619, the

evidenced this tension. His letter delineated what *type* of ship should be allowed to trade—those with a pass—but left the number of vessels to the Governor-General’s discretion. Terasawa’s translated letter anticipated that the Governor-General would decide on a low number: “Many ships from Japan have gone to your land, and [you] the lord governor do not like that so many go; I would like to know the reason for this.”²² Terasawa requested an explanation rather than expressing displeasure, echoing Ieyasu’s willingness to accommodate the Spanish up to a point. Responding in June 1602, the recently-arrived Governor-General Pedro Bravo de Acuña stipulated that no more than six Japanese ships arrive in Manila annually, three with each monsoon. Six years later Rodrigo de Vivero lowered that number to four. No doubt illicit trade swelled the number of ships above stated limits, but such limits were of more concern to the Governor-General than to the shogunate.

Spanish officials also resisted Tokugawa efforts to bring trade farther north. Ieyasu wished to see Spanish ships bringing goods to the ports around Edo. A later letter relayed Ieyasu’s desire that foreign ships call at ports near the *de facto* capital, and his disappointment that none were coming. The Spanish made a half-hearted effort to comply. Acuña and Vivero each ordered ships to call on harbors close to Edo, bypassing the established commercial ports of Kyushu. At least two Spanish vessels conducted trade at one such harbor, Uruga, in the first decade of the seventeenth century, while one other made landfall on the island of Shikoku after faltering on the way to Edo. But the overwhelming majority of Spanish ships coming up from Manila preferred Kyushu ports such as Nagasaki.

procurador general of the Philippines Fernando de los Ríos Coronel cited a Japanese population of 2,000 and asked Philip to order its expulsion. See AGI,FILIPINAS,27,N.108.

²² AGI,FILIPINAS,19,R.3,N.36

In this preference the Spanish were not unique. The Tokugawa consistently tried, and consistently failed, to draw foreign trade into the ports of the Kantō Plain. The Dutch and the English preferred the existing commercial opportunities of Kyushu to the potential benefits of trading near Japan's new political center. Despite Ieyasu's invitation to trade anywhere, the Dutch and English East India Companies settled in the southwest. The Dutch VOC established an outpost ("factory") in Hirado in 1609, and the English followed suit in the same port four years later. Will Adams, by now a trusted Tokugawa advisor and merchant in his own right, recommended to both that they establish their outposts near Edo, to no avail. The VOC was still building out the network of entrepôts throughout East and Southeast Asia that would sustain the company's fortunes for the next century. Maritime aggression fueled the Company as much as legitimate trade, as attested by its many attempts to capture the cargo of Iberian ships. The ongoing conflict between the Habsburg crown and the Low Countries fueled maritime misadventure in Asia, despite the Pax Hispanica in Europe during 1598–1621. For their part, the English had no ready access to Chinese silk, but hoped to secure it through exposure to existing markets. Self-isolation near Edo would not have helped them with these goals.

By contrast, Chinese merchants do not appear to have been courted in this way, likely due to their long history of trade with southwestern Japan, and the lack of formal diplomatic ties to the Ming. Similarly, the annual Portuguese carrack reliably carried its lucrative cargo between Macao and Nagasaki, continuing a connection between the Portuguese and western Kyushu nearly as old as Ieyasu himself.²³ Together the Chinese and the Portuguese (with their Chinese

²³ Ieyasu was born in 1543, the year the Portuguese first set foot in Japan on the island of Tanegashima. Portuguese trade spurred the development of Nagasaki as a commercial port under the Kyushu daimyo Ōmura Sumitada (1533–1587). The Society of Jesus directly managed the port for a brief time before Hideyoshi brought the port under his direct control. The Tokugawa continued the practice of direct administration, though the rest of Kyushu remained under the control of various daimyo.

silk) formed the axis of Japan's foreign trade, establishing a commercial gravity that other trading partners found difficult to ignore.²⁴

If the Spanish were not unique in avoiding trade with Edo, the Tokugawa were uniquely invested in bringing them there. These efforts reveal the connection that existed between Manila and New Spain in the eyes of shogunate officials. While the English and Dutch did not wish to sail the monsoon winds all the way to Edo, the Spanish sailed by northeastern Japan every year with a cargo hold full of silk on their annual voyage eastward to the Americas. Ieyasu knew of this route even before his victory at Sekigahara, while still a member of the five-man council ruling on behalf of Hideyoshi's heir. Ieyasu learned of the route of the Manila Galleon no later than 1598, when he held an audience with a visiting Portuguese missionary who explained the route of the ships. The galleons traveled north on the Kuroshio ("Black Tide") Current near the Pacific coast of Japan before reaching the North Pacific Current propelling them eastward across the Pacific. Edo and the surrounding area seemed a natural waystation for Spanish ships before the long open-water voyage across the northern Pacific. The silks carried back to the Americas were also in demand in Japan, especially in the growing consumer center of Edo. Spanish expertise in silver mining, developed in Latin America, could augment Tokugawa efforts to exploit Japan's silver-rich mineral deposits. Finally, the Americas possessed no direct commercial ties with Asian polities, meaning trade could be established in Edo without having to dislodge merchants from Kyushu. With so much to recommend it, it is little wonder Ieyasu continued to press the issue of trade with New Spain in letters to the Philippines.

²⁴ Merchants from the polities of Vietnam and the Kingdom of Siam, among others, also regularly traded with Japan. Further research could determine to what extent, if any, the shogunate attempted to entice these merchants northward.

Yet nothing happened, as economic and political forces provided little incentive for Manila to cooperate. The Spanish settlement remained apprehensive about the economic ramifications of Japan's entrance into Pacific commerce. The outpost enjoyed a monopoly on the trade goods of an entire continent. Moreover, that monopoly was the Philippines' lifeblood; without the galleons from Acapulco the settlement would collapse, a fact not lost on its inhabitants. They could not afford to dismiss any potential threat or disruption to the galleon trade. Moreover, Ieyasu's request was not Manila's to grant. The Governor-General was the junior partner in Spain's intra-colony trade across the Pacific, for the crown administered the Philippines as an exclave of the Viceroyalty of New Spain. Though Philip's highest-ranking Spanish representative in Asia, the Governor-General answered to the Viceroy in Mexico, as well as to the crown in Madrid. Commercial anxieties aside, rerouting the galleons was a decision for those above the Governor-General's rank. Nor could he arrange for additional ships in New Spain to call on Japanese ports directly. At best, he could forward the request up the ladder. Acuña relayed Ieyasu's request for ships out of the Americas, and even lent his support to the idea, but that was the extent of his influence.²⁵ The Tokugawa were asking Manila to agree to terms it could not dictate.

Manila traded with Japan under the new Tokugawa regime, but never to the satisfaction of Ieyasu and top officials. The Governor-General accepted the licensed trade of the *shuin* system, recognizing Tokugawa authority in the process. But the Philippines tried to keep the number of Japanese ships and Japanese people at a level it thought manageable. Ieyasu invited

²⁵ I have not yet been able to track down the Spanish court's response to Acuña on this matter, if there was one. The relevant holdings at the AGI in Seville do not contain a sustained debate on the question of trade between Japan and the Americas until Japanese ships began arriving in Acapulco in 1610. The ships forced the issue, though it is possible that the court commented to Acuña on the matter earlier. It is highly unlikely any such response would have given concrete support to Ieyasu's requests.

ships north to Edo, and the Spanish acquiesced in fits and starts, driven more by the desire to mollify the Tokugawa leader than any commercial opportunity. The bulk of the Japan-Spain trade continued over the sea lanes linking Manila to the ports of Kyushu. Similar efforts to pull trade north throughout the decade met with little success, as the newly-arrived VOC settled far from Edo.

Ieyasu's government was not removed from the mechanisms of commerce. Tokugawa officials controlled Nagasaki, and the shogunate routed silk through a sanctioned cartel of distributors limited to merchants from major markets. Together these measures ensured a prominent role for the shogunate regarding the price and volume of silk imports. Control over Japan's mines also gave the shogunate a say in the export of silver. Finally, the *shuin* system reinforced the shogunate's authority at home and influence abroad, establishing Japan as an arbiter of official trade in the East and South China Seas.

But Ieyasu sought more, and his city of Edo remained geographically isolated from foreign trade even as his administrative mechanisms took hold. Spain's route to the Americas appeared as a straightforward way to ameliorate the issue. If, however, the Spanish proved unwilling to venture to Edo, the Tokugawa could strike out on their own. Ieyasu had the resources to fund such a venture. In Will Adams and other advisors, he had capable shipwrights on hand. But the Pacific crossing was the longest open-ocean voyage that one could attempt. Ieyasu lacked sailors knowledgeable and capable enough to handle the crossing. He also lacked the assurance that a Japanese dropping anchor in the Americas would be permitted to trade and purchase provisions. In 1609, a violent storm happened to spit up remedies to both problems off the coast of the Bōsō Peninsula.

1609 ushered in the peak of Tokugawa involvement in exploration of foreign affairs. Developments unfolded on multiple fronts that year. With Ieyasu's permission, the Shimazu clan of Satsuma invaded the Ryukyu kingdom to the south (present-day Okinawa), and sent the subdued king to pay homage to the Tokugawa in Edo. Thereafter, Ryukyu sent annual tribute missions to the Tokugawa, mediated by the Shimazu. The VOC established itself in Hirado, marking the beginning of a sustained Dutch presence in the archipelago. A scuffle between Japanese and Portuguese in Macao spilled over into Nagasaki, capped off by the dramatic sinking of the Portuguese *Madre de Deus* in the city's harbor at the hands of its own captain, disrupting trade with Portugal until 1612.²⁶ The incident and its aftermath, along with growing unease about the influence of Portuguese missionaries in Japan, increased Tokugawa willingness to explore alternatives. The *shuin* trade continued to thrive, as the Tokugawa shogunate authorized over a hundred passes to sixteen destinations through 1609.²⁷

That year an autumn storm contributed to the flurry of diplomatic activity, catching three Spanish ships making the eastward journey from Manila to Acapulco. The *San Antonio* weathered the storm and completed its journey, while the winds blew the smaller *Santa Ana* toward the coast of southern Kyushu. The third and largest ship, the *San Francisco*, broke up on shore much farther north, and deposited outgoing Governor-General of the Philippines Rodrigo de Vivero northeast of Edo.²⁸ Vivero's surprise sojourn in Japan would catalyze the next decade of Japan's bold experiment with crossing the Pacific.

²⁶ The *Madre de Deus* affair is recounted in Boxer, *Christian Century*, 278–285.

²⁷ Nakamura Tadashi, *Eiinbon Ikoku nikki: Konchiin Sūden gaikō monjo shūsei* (Tokyo: Tokyo Bijutsu, 1989), 3–4.

²⁸ See Juan Gil, *Hidalgos y samurais* (Madrid: Alianza Editorial, 1991), 149–51. The *Santa Ana* departed Kyushu the next year and reached Acapulco in October 1610.

Red Seals, Black Ships, and Mixed Messages

Rodrigo de Vivero's unexpected arrival in Japan brought Tokugawa and Habsburg authority closer together than ever before, yet his sojourn revealed how far apart the two polities remained. His visit also foreshadowed the difficulty of locating a singular "Spanish" or "Japanese" authority for contemporary actors (and present-day scholars), and the challenge of sustaining a conversation between dissonant diplomatic frameworks. The web of representatives, letters, and ships produced in Vivero's wake exemplified the complications dogging outreach efforts between the shogunate and the court. Vivero departed Japan in 1610, accompanied by a Franciscan friar carrying letters from the Tokugawa to Philip's court in Madrid. In the next decade, the king of Spain, the retired Tokugawa shogun, the sitting shogun, two viceroys of New Spain, a daimyo of northern Japan, two governors-general of the Philippines, and the pope all tried to make sense of one another through correspondence and representatives. Replies lagged, ambassadorial parties overlapped, representatives pursued their own agendas, and ships arrived where they weren't expected or welcome. Distance and disparate interests conspired to foil persistent Japanese efforts to deepen commercial ties and establish the diplomatic common ground necessary to support them.

Temporarily, the shipwrecked Vivero bridged the distance. Having survived the tempest that washed him onto Japan's Pacific coast, the outgoing governor-general of the Philippines spent close to a year in the archipelago. The Tokugawa quickly realized the value of their guest, and escorted him to the halls of power. Hidetada first received Vivero in audience in Edo before Ieyasu summoned the Spaniard to his complex in Sunpu to the southwest. Vivero described these meetings as amicable encounters with affable, inquisitive leaders. Hidetada purportedly "smiled

as he told the interpreters how much he had looked forward to receiving and meeting me.”²⁹

Hidetada (referred to as “the prince”) appeared in “two green and yellow robes, which they call *kimono*, and his sword and dagger, or *katana*, were girded over them.”³⁰ Vivero sat a few paces away from the shogun, and the two men conversed for half an hour as Hidetada inquired about maritime navigation and Vivero’s ship.

After meeting with “the prince,” Vivero journeyed to meet the “emperor” (Ieyasu). Vivero recognized where power resided, commenting that Hidetada “did not dare arrange anything without telling his father.”³¹ The audience with the elder Tokugawa was more formal, but also proceeded cordially. Evidently, he was well-received in Ieyasu’s residence. “[T]hanks to the Prince’s proclamation I was welcomed and greeted so warmly everywhere that if God were not lacking among these barbarians and they were my king’s vassals, I would renounce my country in favor of theirs.”³² Vivero had corresponded with the elder Tokugawa from the Philippines; now the two continued their conversation in person. Vivero contrasted his interaction with Ieyasu to the deference shown by “one of the greatest lords of Japan,” who paid tribute to the Tokugawa in Vivero’s presence. “At a hundred paces from where His Highness was seated this lord prostrated himself on the floor, lowering his head so much that he seemed to want to kiss the ground. Nobody spoke a word to him nor did he raise his eyes to the Emperor as he entered and left.” By contrast, chamberlains led Vivero to sit in a chair “some six paces” away

²⁹ Michael Cooper, *An Unscheduled Visit: Rodrigo de Vivero in Japan, 1609-1610* (Tokyo: Asiatic Society of Japan, 2008), 13. Cooper translates Vivero’s report, appending comments and an extended introduction. Citations using page numbers, as most do here, draw on Cooper’s translation of Vivero’s text.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Ibid., 6.

³² Ibid., 14-15. Hyperbolic statements like this one played up Japan’s merits and the potential for deeper ties. Vivero’s *Avisos*, written after relations between Japan and Spain collapsed, showed less enthusiasm.

from Ieyasu, and upon reaching his arranged seat, “the Emperor...slightly inclined his head and with much affability smiled at me, raising his hand and gesturing that I should be seated.” Vivero paid his respects in the manner of one addressing the Spanish throne, while Ieyasu offered assurances that he would provide whatever supplies Vivero might require. The audiences Hidetada and Ieyasu granted Vivero were the highest-level direct communication ever between the Tokugawa and Spanish officialdom.³³

The audiences yielded a repatriation plan, a direct diplomatic overture, and a flight of fancy. The first doubled as the second. Returning Vivero safely to New Spain served Tokugawa diplomatic objectives on multiple fronts. The goodwill gesture increased the likelihood of a positive response. Vivero’s repatriation also provided Ieyasu a solid pretense for sending a ship across the Pacific and jumpstarting the commercial relationship he had pursued for a decade. Additionally, direct contact with New Spain bypassed Manila, moving the shogunate further up the ladder of Spanish imperial administration. But Ieyasu’s initiative did not stop on the shores of Latin America. Previous governors-general had rebuffed the shogunate’s proposals regarding New Spain by citing the need for their sovereign’s review and approval. Thus, the Tokugawa sent their appeal straight to the top. The *San Buena Ventura* sailed for Acapulco, but Ieyasu’s letter and seal were bound for Madrid. Rescuing and returning a high-ranking official, combined with dispatching the first foreign ship to call on Acapulco for peaceable trade, ensured that Ieyasu’s letter would reach its intended recipient.

Delivering Vivero across the Pacific required an ocean-going vessel and a knowledgeable crew, preconditions the Tokugawa were fortuitously able to meet. Tokugawa advisor Will

³³ These details draw from Cooper, *Unscheduled Visit*, 18–21. In his introduction (i) Cooper suggests that “probably no Westerner of his rank and experience reached it [Japan] until diplomatic relations were established with foreign nations in the second half of the nineteenth century.”

Adams provided the first by constructing the *San Buena Ventura*, an ocean-going ship capable of making the crossing. The Manila galleons dwarfed Adams' 120-ton vessel, but the *San Buena Ventura* was nonetheless outfitted for the multi-month crossing.³⁴ In early August the vessel departed Uraga, on the southeastern side of the Miura Peninsula guarding the entrance to Edo (now Tokyo) Bay. Departing near Edo modeled the commercial avenue the Tokugawa sought: a connection between northeastern Japan and the Americas close to the heart of the shogunate's power.

As for sailors, a group of Vivero's surviving compatriots crewed the *San Buena Ventura*. Their navigational expertise was as critical as the ship they sailed. In 1610, Spain alone sailed the Pacific with regularity.³⁵ After Magellan's successful westward crossing in 1520–21, it had taken the Spanish over four decades to discover the eastward voyage back from Asia to the Americas.³⁶ The Spanish navigator and Augustinian friar Andrés de Urdaneta charted the route in 1565. Urdaneta's navigational breakthrough enabled a sustained, if tenuous, Spanish presence in the Philippines anchored by the annual crossing and return of the Manila galleons.³⁷ Without Spanish sailors and pilots (or their charts) any ship would be sailing blind, a perilous proposition

³⁴ William Schurz estimated that Manila galleons from this period regularly topped 1000 tons, at times even approaching 2000. See Schurz, *The Manila Galleon* (New York: E.P. Dutton, 1939), 193–94.

³⁵ The Englishmen Francis Drake and Thomas Cavendish both circumnavigated the globe in the sixteenth century, but raided New Spain's Pacific coast rather than pursuing trade. Like Magellan before them, both men crossed westward near the equator.

³⁶ Magellan's fleet of five ships ranged in size from 75 to 120 tons, making the *San Buena Ventura* comparable in size to the first European vessels to navigate the Pacific.

³⁷ This first eastward crossing exacted a toll on the ship and crew, taking 130 days to complete and costing over a dozen men their lives. Technically, Urdaneta was the second to cross. The rebellious Alonso de Arellano had abandoned the rest of the expedition and arrived in Acapulco some weeks earlier. The combination of Arellano's mutiny and Urdaneta's more useful navigational notes ensured that the eastward crossing became known as "Urdaneta's route." See Walter McDougall's colorful account of the origins of the route in his *Let the Sea Make a Noise* (New York: Basic Books, 1993), 25–26.

for three months—or more—over open water. European, including Spanish, criticism of Japanese ship craft has contributed to longstanding dismissal of the archipelago's maritime capabilities, but certainly the Tokugawa were willing to develop maritime capacity at the highest levels when it suited their interests.³⁸ They could not have picked a higher bar to clear than the single longest open-water voyage in the world.

The risks of the voyage and the rarity of the opportunity necessitated a return on investment, and the *San Buena Ventura* set sail also looking to make a profit. The shogunate hoped to pull more Spanish ships to Japan, but in the meantime a Japanese ship ventured out to New Spain. Twenty-three Japanese were on board, all merchants.³⁹ Among these, the Kyoto merchant Tanaka Shōsuke would be recognized by the Spanish as leader of the group, and honored as such by the viceroy.⁴⁰ As with later voyages, details on the contents of the cargo hold are lacking. Textiles featured prominently, perhaps along with Japanese lacquerware and rarities like folding screens and sets of armor.⁴¹ Tokugawa Hidetada sent five sets of armor as a gift to the court in Madrid, and merchants may have supplemented them with additional sets for sale.

³⁸ Boxer, for example, noted that Japanese shipbuilding lagged behind its peers, and characterized requests for shipwrights as evidence for technological deficiencies rather than an interest in developing capacity. See *The Christian Century*, 266-67.

³⁹ Gonoï, *Hasekura Tsunenaga*, 32.

⁴⁰ See Chimalpahin, *Annals of His Time* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2006), 171-77. The Nahuatl chronicler put the number of Japanese at nineteen or twenty, three of whom were baptized in New Spain.

⁴¹ Circumstantial evidence supports this speculation. The Japanese and Spanish participated in the silk-for-silver trade in East Asia as suppliers of silver. However, it is unlikely that a cargo hold of silver could be brought to Acapulco without remark. Commenting on a later Japanese vessel, a Spanish Franciscan fretted that the ship would trade for American silver, strongly suggesting the Japanese were not taking bullion to Acapulco. It is possible that Japanese mimicked the Manila galleons and brought Chinese silks for sale in the Americas. Lacquerware featured in Japan's trade with East Asia, and Japanese folding screens (屏風, *byōbu*) are known to have crossed the Pacific. Finally, a limited quantity of *katana*, armor, and arms for sale may have accompanied those presented as gifts. For an overview of Japanese trade policy at this time see Michael Laver, *The Sakoku Edicts and the Politics of Tokugawa Hegemony* (Amherst, NY: Cambria Press, 2011), 100–108.

Ieyasu's letter to Madrid mirrored the ship's overlapping diplomatic and commercial missions. Notarized with the hegemon's vermillion seal, the letter doubled as a license authorizing Spanish ships to call on any port in Japan. A translation of it opens this chapter. The document elaborated on the same format as the dozens of passes the shogunate issued to foreign and domestic merchants that decade: matter-of-fact text, followed by the date, and then the official seal, proceeding from right to left across the paper. Speaking to a foreign authority rather than an individual merchant, the text of Ieyasu's 1609 missive was slightly more verbose. Passes issued to individuals stated only the origin, the destination, the date, and the seal. Ieyasu went so far as to mention discussion with "the former governor" and named Sotelo.

A pass issued to the Dutch earlier in 1609 provides additional comparison. Here as well Ieyasu talked at relative length by stating clearly that the Dutch were to be permitted to venture to Japan without interference. Written five months earlier than the letter to Madrid, the two documents contain stretches of near-identical language, with one or two characters changed or the order of a certain clause rearranged. The Dutch, for example, were to be allowed "at any inlet" (何の浦に, *izure no ura ni*) in Japan, while the Spanish were granted permission to arrive "in any port" (何の湊へ, *izure no minato e*). Regardless of where they landed, Ieyasu assured the Dutch that "not even the slightest offense would be allowed" (聊疎意在間敷候也, *isasakamo soi aru majiku sōrō nari*), and promised the Spanish that "no offense would be allowed" (疎意在之間敷候, *soi kore aru majiku sōrō*). The primary formal difference lay with the placement of the names. "The Duke of Lerma, of Spain" preceded Ieyasu's text. Conversely, the name Jacques Groenwegen, written out phonetically in Japanese (ちやくす・くるうんべいけ, *chakusu kurūnbeike*) trailed Ieyasu's seal, written in the bottom-left corner of the document issued to the Dutch. The difference may have stemmed from status, the Duke being a high-ranking

government figure, in contrast to Groenwegen's position as private merchant. Additionally, Ieyasu was reaching outward to Spain, but in the Dutch case was responding to the appearance of VOC merchants in Japan. This difference may have called for a higher grade of formality. Lerma's address paralleled the styling Ieyasu used for himself. Documents bearing not just his seal but his name and title often referred to "Minamoto Ieyasu of Great Japan" (大日本源家康); addressing "The Duke of Lerma, of Spain" (えすはんや・とふけい・てい・れるま; the Spanish "Duque de Lerma" emerges here in Japanese as "Dōkei dei Reruma") established equivalence, if not quite equality. However, in this instance Ieyasu's name appeared only in his formal seal as 源家康忠恕 (*Minamoto Ieyasu, with sincerity and consideration*).⁴²

The 1609 letter to Lerma also functioned as a pass, gradations of respect and a higher word count notwithstanding. Ieyasu packaged the matter of vessels from New Spain as a grant rather than a request, assuming a hierarchical relationship with himself occupying the superior position. Ieyasu thus issued more than a letter; he granted Spain a place within a commercial system dictated by the Tokugawa. Intermediaries, informal contact, and successive translations might frame the missive as a request to the Spanish crown, but Ieyasu himself avoided any pretense of supplication or seeking favor. The text of the license declared, it did not question. The request remained implicit: "the notion that black ships should be sent from New Spain to Japan has been passed along to the former lord of Luzon."⁴³ Conducting the message through Vivero shielded Ieyasu from having to sort out his relationship with the sovereign of Spain.

⁴² For information on the form and function of the seals used by Ieyasu and others among the Japanese elite, see Ishii Ryōsuke, *Inban no rekishi* (Tokyo: Akashi Shoten, 1991), and Nagazumi Yōko, *Shuinsen* (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 2001), 1–6.

⁴³ In the original: のひえすはんやより日本に黒船可被渡由前呂宋国主被申越候 (*Nobi Esupan'ya yori Nihon ni kurofune watasareru beki yoshi, zen Roson kokushu mōshikosare sōrō*).

Ieyasu may have addressed his letter to Lerma rather than Philip for much the same reason. Furthermore, mentioning the former governor-general reminded the recipient of Ieyasu's role in providing for his safe return.

Ieyasu also declined to mention any gifts.⁴⁴ The omission was in keeping with the document's function as a pass while asserting Tokugawa authority, and perhaps supremacy. Here, the dual heads of the Tokugawa government played off each other to the shogunate's benefit. Hidetada's letter did mention gifts, the five suits of armor mentioned above. Though formally invested as shogun since 1605, the younger Tokugawa remained second-in-command while his father lived. The arrangement produced a rough parallel in status between Hidetada and Lerma, at least in terms of influence within their respective contexts.⁴⁵ Aside from the gifts, the rest of Hidetada's language followed in the vein of his father, granting Spanish ships leave to dock in Japan's ports and mentioning Vivero. Unlike his father, Hidetada announced himself in the document, adopting the style "Minamoto Hidetada, Barbarian-quelling Generalissimo of the Country of Japan" (日本国征夷大將軍源秀忠, *Nihon koku sei-taishōgun Minamoto no Hidetada*). He also addressed Lerma as the "lord of the Spain" (えすはんや国主), a construction paralleling Vivero's appellation as the "lord of Luzon."⁴⁶ Hidetada appended

⁴⁴ Ieyasu certainly condoned the five suits of armor sent by Hidetada.

⁴⁵ I do not wish to overstate this similarity, just to note that they functioned as the second-most influential public personage. The two men had very different relationships to official power, and different relationships (personal and political) with their superiors.

⁴⁶ AGI,MP-ESCRITURA_CIFRA,31. Accessible online via the Portal de Archivos Españoles (PARES), <http://pares.mcu.es> (accessed March 25, 2017). The letter also appears in Murakami, *Ikoku ōfuku*, doc. 33. "Lord" here did not imply the supreme authority of all Spain. Hidetada was not mistaking Lerma for Philip III. The word 国主 (*kokushu*), rendered here as "lord," is slippery. Combined, the characters "country" (国) and "master" (主) could denote the sovereign of a petty kingdom or circumscribed area, as well as a powerful figure within a larger governmental structure. Daimyo might also be referred to as *kokushu*. Given that Vivero and Lerma were assigned the same title, it is more likely that they were perceived as the chief delegates of the Spanish crown within the Philippines and Spain respectively. Date Masamune would directly address Philip in his 1613 letters, referring to the Habsburg sovereign as *teiō-sama* (帝王様), perhaps best translated as "Your Highness." Date used the same

Lerma's name with 机下 (*kika*, literally "under the desk"), respectful language absent from Ieyasu's missive. These differences in appellation, content, and format suggest a conscious effort by Tokugawa leadership to define itself vis-à-vis the Spanish monarchy, and to strike a balance in asserting its authority without unnecessarily giving cause for offense.

Still, the balance erred on the side of assertion. Letters and passes aside, Ieyasu elected to send a ship to Spanish America without seeking permission to do so. Vivero's presence served as convenient cover, as did his willingness to be part of the endeavor. The former governor-general could have returned to Manila and boarded a ship to Acapulco from there. Vivero initially considered this option, but opted to travel via Ieyasu's ship to demonstrate his own goodwill and enthusiasm for building relations across the Pacific. As the nephew of the Viceroy of New Spain and Marqués de Salinas Don Luis de Velasco, Vivero expected to facilitate a warm reception for the Japanese in Acapulco and put in a good word. Unfortunately for Vivero, those words were the aforementioned flight of fancy.

Vivero drafted an account of his time in Japan, and packaged this together with a formal report to the crown upon his return to New Spain. Vivero's writings include a record of his shipwreck and survival, a recounting of meetings with Tokugawa leadership, and his general impressions of Japan's people and customs. Vivero commented on general demeanor, bathing customs, and standards (or the lack thereof) of sexual propriety, amongst other matters, but the centerpiece of his account consisted of a blueprint for Japanese-Spanish relations based on his conversations with the Tokugawa and his understanding of Philip's priorities. The terms laid out

appellation for Ieyasu, while referring to the Viceroy of New Spain as the *kokushu* (国主) of New Spain. This suggests a clear distinction between the two terms in the imaginations of Japanese leaders when addressing Spanish officials and the monarchy. For more information, see Chapter Two of this dissertation. The title of *teiō* (帝王) was also used to refer to James I. See Timon Screech, "The English and the Control of Christianity in the Early Edo Period," *Japan Review*, no. 24 (January 1, 2012): 3–40.

by the eager former official touched on preparations for Spanish ambassadors stationed in Japan, establishing a Spanish fort in the archipelago, and taking soundings of the Japanese coast in support of vessels from New Spain.

Subsequent negotiations between Tokugawa officials and Vivero produced provisional terms, unrealistic on both sides. Things started simple enough. Vivero stated three goals to the shogunate in his capacity as makeshift representative: tolerance of the Catholic mission in Japan, closer Japanese-Spanish ties, and Dutch expulsion. Already there was a problem, as the expulsion of the Dutch was a non-starter. Earlier that year Ieyasu had renewed his open-handed commitment to Dutch trade by issuing the pass discussed earlier. The shogunate would not alter its foreign policy at the request of one wayward Spaniard, nor be amenable to reneging its pledge of trade and protection. Vivero continued to push the issue over the course of his stay but made no headway, even admitting his failure to nudge the Tokugawa in his *Account*.

Ieyasu's interpretation of closer ties produced overambitious expectations. According to Vivero, the Tokugawa elder requested fifty miners from the Spanish Americas to work in and develop mines in Japan.⁴⁷ Direct traffic—technological and commercial—between New Spain and the archipelago was implicit in the request, which lay beyond any claim to authority Vivero could credibly make. In response, Vivero presented a particularly onerous set of preconditions. Vivero insisted that the miners keep half of the silver they extracted, with Philip and Ieyasu evenly splitting the remainder. In other words, Vivero required that fully seventy-five percent of Japanese silver be remanded to Spain and its subjects as the price for access to its expertise.⁴⁸

⁴⁷ Cooper, 23. Tokugawa records do not contain these details, making it difficult to assess what the shogunate promised, considered, or implied during the back and forth with Vivero.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 34–35.

Philip dispatching fifty miners to Japan stretched credulity; Ieyasu willingly parting with three quarters of his mineral wealth and primary export approached the absurd. Michael Cooper suggests neither party offered these terms expecting compliance.⁴⁹ Vivero may have deliberately countered Ieyasu's unrealistic proposal with one of his own to provide diplomatic cover on both sides, dampening Tokugawa expectations while not committing the Spanish crown to an arrangement Philip might reject. Whatever the case, Vivero did not elaborate on any such logic in his *Account*, presenting the proposal straight-facedly. The two parties did not come to a firm commitment on the matter, though Ieyasu purportedly did not reject the idea outright.

The mining technology in question concerned methods for extracting high-grade silver from impure ore. Japanese mines melted down alloys of silver and metals like iron, using a bed of ash or charcoal to drain away the base metals from the silver. This cupellation process, known as *haifuki* (灰吹, literally “ash-blowing”), entered Japan via the Korean peninsula in the sixteenth century and catalyzed the archipelago's silver production. By contrast, most Spanish mines in the Americas relied on mercury and other compounds to extract silver from ore in a process of amalgamation.⁵⁰ Vivero oversaw the Taxco mines (in present-day Mexico) as part of his prior administrative career and knew the importance of the metal—and related extraction methods—to the Spanish Indies. Ieyasu displayed similar concern when he brought the archipelago's mines under direct Tokugawa control. The precious metal's value to both sides helps explain Ieyasu's request, Vivero's high price, and the ambiguous result of their

⁴⁹ Ibid., xiii. Cooper presents this analysis in the foreword to his translation.

⁵⁰ For an overview of mining techniques in Americas, see, D. A. Brading and Harry E. Cross, “Colonial Silver Mining: Mexico and Peru,” *The Hispanic American Historical Review* 52, no. 4 (1972): 545–79.

negotiations. Importantly, Ieyasu's communication with Philip made no mention of silver, avoiding any potential friction.

The remaining terms structured Spain's anticipated presence in Japan, and Vivero reported little pushback from the Tokugawa on these issues. The governor-general requested safe port and conduct for Spanish ships in the archipelago, and fair prices for any necessary riggings and provisions. Land would be granted for a Spanish outpost, and missionaries would be free to come and go without persecution. Future Spanish ambassadors would also be permitted to bring missionaries with them, and the Spaniards would govern their own affairs. Finally, Spanish vessels would be permitted to conduct soundings of Japan's coastline in support of their voyages and the expected trading post.⁵¹ Ieyasu's letter granting trade privileges overlapped with Vivero's stipulation of open ports, safe conduct, fair prices, and fair treatment. Tensions over Christianity simmered but had not yet exploded, and the shogunate might yet have tolerated limited missionary activity if trade with America became regular. Additionally, Vivero and Ieyasu possibly held different interpretations of what it meant for the Spanish to govern their own affairs in Japan, and the two sides may have left the issue sufficiently vague for Vivero to claim agreement. In any case, Ieyasu made no mention of it in his writing to the Spanish monarchy. In contrast to Vivero's silver scheme, these concrete terms laid the groundwork for increased Spanish shipping and were met with more support from Edo.

Vivero did not draft these provisions alone. Following audiences with Hidetada and Ieyasu, Vivero journeyed to Kyushu to check on the *Santa Ana* and possibly return to the Philippines from there. Deciding to cross on Ieyasu's ship instead, Vivero again headed north toward Uraga and Edo. During these travels, he encountered the Franciscan friar Luis Sotelo, a

⁵¹ Cooper, 34–36.

veteran of the Japan mission recognized for his Japanese-language abilities. Soon after their meeting, Sotelo began coordinating with Tokugawa officials and drafting terms on Vivero's behalf. The missionary's involvement recommended him to the shogunate as well, as reflected by mention of him in Ieyasu and Hidetada's missives to Philip. The division of labor and imagination between Vivero and Sotelo is not clear, but many of Vivero's terms appeared in subsequent diplomatic efforts involving the friar.

Ultimately, the Tokugawa looked to exploit Vivero's fortuitous appearance more than they valued his proposed terms. As the outgoing interim governor-general of an Asian outpost of an American colony of a European empire, Vivero was several degrees removed from the authority necessary to treat effectively with the shogunate. The Tokugawa were cognizant of his status, noting that Vivero was the "former" (前, *zen*) lord of Luzon.⁵² They did not bind themselves to Vivero's proposals, rejected out-of-hand his request for the expulsion of the Dutch, and avoided a firm commitment on silver. The shogunate corresponded on its own terms, granting permission rather than presenting conditions. Additionally, Ieyasu demurred from naming Vivero his representative. Instead of sending an accidental envoy, he elected to dispatch a representative of his choice: first Sotelo, then the friar Alonso Muñoz.⁵³

Similarly, Vivero exerted little influence on his superiors in Spain, though he did correctly identify the crown's principal areas of concern. Vivero's *Account* reached Madrid, but the king and his Council of the Indies (*Consejo de Indias*) debated the contents of the Tokugawa missives without referencing Vivero's in any detail. As the next chapter relates, Spanish

⁵² See the translation of the Ieyasu's letter and footnote 1 above for Vivero's title as the "former" governor-general.

⁵³ Muñoz's presence requires explanation, and is elaborated on below. Muñoz did not appear in Ieyasu's letter, but Hidetada named both friars in his own, penned later, a change Ieyasu no doubt knew of and approved.

enclaves, ambassadors, and miners did not factor into the discussion. However, concerns over silver, unease over the state of the Catholic mission, and anxiety about the Dutch presence in Japan did flavor official conversations in Madrid, Acapulco, and Mexico for as long as Japanese trans-Pacific commerce remained a possibility. Vivero spoke presciently when he asked the Tokugawa to turn away the Dutch and protect missionaries, and when he set a high price on exporting Spain's mining expertise across an ocean.

The *San Buena Ventura* departed Uraga on August 1, 1610. Ieyasu's ship left the port of his choice, carrying missives from the two heads of the shogunate. The ship ferried Vivero and the friar Muñoz, along with a group of Japanese merchants and their cargo. The first vessel not under Spanish control to follow "Urdaneta's route," the ship lived up to its name and delivered cargo, crew, and parchment safely to Acapulco after an uneventful crossing.

After receiving his nephew Vivero, the viceroy of New Spain (the Marqués de Salinas) split the response to this unexpected and ongoing diplomatic effort in two. Salinas forwarded the Tokugawa letters and their courier onward to Spain for Philip's consideration. But Vivero's return and Tokugawa outreach necessitated a quicker response than Spain could provide. Salinas thus named the general Sebastián Vizcaíno as the head of a response embassy from New Spain, charged with formally thanking the Japanese, conducting soundings of the archipelago's coastline, and returning the Japanese merchants who had arrived on the *San Buena Ventura*. Soon after the viceroy dispatched Vizcaíno, Philip recalled Salinas to Madrid to assume the presidency of the Council of the Indies. Salinas would thus participate in the crown's deliberations on Japan from Spain for the bulk of the next decade.

Vivero had no further contact with Japan, but continued his career in colonial administration. He rose to the governorship of Tierrafirme, in present-day Panama, and then the

presidency of the *audiencia* of Veragua, similarly located on the isthmus. In these capacities, he helped coordinate the safe transport of South America's mineral wealth onward to peninsular Spain through the so-called treasure fleet.⁵⁴ Vivero had embraced a model of cooperation between Japan and Spain with an enthusiasm matched by very few of his peers. Conversely, the dissonance between his *Account* and Ieyasu's communication spoke to the divide in interest and priorities of each polity. Vivero's *Avisos*, written much later, took a dimmer view of the country and its inhabitants. They also contained the suggestion that Japan and Spain conduct a joint invasion of the Korean peninsula, suggesting Vivero maintained a flair for the fanciful.⁵⁵

A Second Stranded Spaniard

Sebastián Vizcaíno's mission to Japan also blended the imaginative with the practical. Vizcaíno led an eventful life. Upon his arrival in Japan in June 1611, he was sixty-three years old, and had campaigned as a soldier in Europe, assisted in the governance of New Spain, and been the victim of Thomas Cavendish's famous plundering of Spanish ships and treasure in Baja California in 1587. Cavendish spared Vizcaíno—then a merchant—and many others but made off with a cargo hold full of their goods, following in Drake's footsteps in both plundering and circumnavigating the globe. Vizcaíno's career then shifted toward exploration. In 1602, he sailed up Alta California to map the coastline and to scout potential safe harbors for the galleons crossing from Manila.⁵⁶ Though not the first Spaniard to reconnoiter that far north, Vizcaíno's names for many locales—San Diego Bay, Santa Catalina Island, Monterey Bay, among them—

⁵⁴ Cooper, *An Unscheduled Visit*, viii–ix.

⁵⁵ Ibid, xx–xxi.

⁵⁶ These ships crossed the Pacific far enough north that first sight of land was usually the coastline of present-day California. Only then would the vessels tack south to Acapulco.

remain in use today.⁵⁷ Salinas considered this experience when naming Vizcaíno to head the response mission to Japan. The viceroy charged Vizcaíno with more than delivering a response and conducting soundings; he also tasked the explorer with searching the Northwestern Pacific for the rumored mineral-rich islands *Rica de Plata* and *Rica de Oro*. The fabled islands garnered European attention in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, with many convinced that yet more wealth lay beyond the Japanese archipelago.⁵⁸ The mission to Japan dovetailed nicely with the search for the islands, as their discovery would justify the cost of maintaining Spanish activity in the area around Japan. Together, the soundings of a real coastline and the pursuit of an imaginary one focused Vizcaíno's attention further north than any Spaniard before him, facilitating interactions with a Japanese daimyo northeast, rather than southwest, of Edo.

Both Tokugawa leaders granted Vizcaíno an audience within weeks of his arrival, but mounting tensions defined his two-year tenure in Japan. Diplomatic protocol was one flashpoint, as Vizcaíno chafed at the imposition of Tokugawa etiquette. The Tokugawa permitted Vizcaíno's soundings, but later soured on the enterprise when Will Adams suggested that the Spanish were taking advantage of Japanese largesse.⁵⁹ Additionally, weather and water conspired to keep Vizcaíno in Japan past his welcome. A tempest forced Vizcaíno to turn back to the archipelago after his initial departure. The storm damaged the ship enough to preclude another voyage back to the Americas, leaving the shogunate with a second stranded Spaniard on its

⁵⁷ Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo was the first European to explore the California coastline, in 1542.

⁵⁸ For a brief history of these islands in the European imagination, see Oka Mihoko, "Elusive Islands of Silver: Japan in the Early European Geographic Imagination," in *Cartographic Japan: A History in Maps*, ed. Kären Wigen et al. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2016), 21–23.

⁵⁹ See, J.F. Schütte, "Don Rodrigo de Vivero de Velazco y Sebastián Vizcaíno en Japón," in *La expansión hispanoamericana en Asia: siglos XVI y XVII*, ed. Ernesto de la Torre Villar (México: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1980), 121. Schütte bases this speculation on Adams' actions from a Jesuit letter, reproduced on pages 110–18.

hands. Soon after, Ieyasu's own attempts to send a second ship to New Spain were dashed when the vessel sank within a day of setting sail. All the while, continued missionary intransigence tested the shogunate's religious tolerance as it waited for commercial results.

In Vizcaíno, the Tokugawa again faced a foreign representative unable to respond to their principal objectives. Vizcaíno had no answers for them; Salinas had authorized his representative to give thanks and repay debts but little more, and Vizcaíno avoided any firm commercial commitments. Where Vivero arrived unauthorized to treat but eager to do so, Vizcaíno arrived with the full authority of the Viceroyalty of New Spain but little else. His mission was to restore the *status quo*, not to advance the conversation. Vizcaíno stated as much when requesting an audience:

“[I come] only to bring to Your Majesty (Ieyasu) news of how the said Marqués received the passes and letter that the father Fray Alonso Muñoz, in the name of Your Majesty, brought him. Likewise, to bring to this kingdom Josquendono (Tanaka Shōsuke) and the rest of the Japanese vassals of Your Majesty who last year left from this [kingdom] to that of New Spain with Don Rodrigo de Vivero, and [for] the return of the silver lent to the said Don Rodrigo by order of Your Majesty and the value of the ship *San Buena Ventura*...”⁶⁰

The letter, copied in the official chronicle of Vizcaíno's embassy, offered little.⁶¹ The viceroy had “received” the letter but demonstrated no commitment to action. Similarly, Vizcaíno

⁶⁰ Quote taken from Gil, 319. Gil reproduces the *Relación del viaje de Sebastián Vizcaíno* in full, pp. 309–383. Citations from this section are of the transcribed primary source rather than Gil's analysis. In these instances I provide the chapter and paragraph numbers of the *Relación* (i.e. *Relación*, 3:12).

⁶¹ Juan Gil's analysis of the chronicle's authorship suggests the account was written in Japan as events unfolded. The viceroy forwarded a manuscript copy to Madrid upon Vizcaíno's return in 1614. See Gil, 284–285, 305–308.

did not acknowledge here that Ieyasu had written to the Duke of Lerma in Madrid; read alone, the letter gives the impression that Ieyasu had addressed the viceroy.

Moreover, the fate of the *San Buena Ventura* and Vizcaíno's own route spoke to the tepid reception Ieyasu's overture garnered in New Spain. For one, the viceroy had taken the Tokugawa ship away. In the same letter, Vizcaíno offered a vague explanation as to why, stating that the *San Buena Ventura* purchase "was not [made] with the intention to [use the vessel to] return to this kingdom, for reasons that the said Xosquendono (Tanaka Shōsuke) and the rest of the Japanese will tell Your Majesty."⁶² Salinas purchased the ship, likely to forestall Japan's Pacific shipping efforts while Philip considered the monarchy's response to Ieyasu.⁶³ We do not know what reasons Tanaka and his companions offered the shogunate, and the Tokugawa do not appear to have left written comment on the matter. However, Vivero reported that Ieyasu had given permission to sell the *Buena Ventura* if necessary.⁶⁴ Perhaps Ieyasu anticipated that once the ship delivered Vivero the Japanese would be unable to sail back on their own absent Spanish expertise. Perhaps Vivero exaggerated. Either way, it would not be the last time the Spanish purchased a Japanese ship to clear the ocean, nor would it be the last time the Japanese owner appeared to abide by the decision with little comment.⁶⁵

⁶² Ibid., 319 (*Relacion*, 3:12).

⁶³ Salinas mentioned the purchase in a letter to crown dated 1611.03.18. AGI,MEXICO,28,N.13. At the time he considered using the Japanese vessel to search for the islands Rica de Oro and Rica de Plata. Upon combining the return envoy to Japan and the expedition to the islands under Vizcaíno, Salinas sought a different boat. See Gil, 277–78.

⁶⁴ Cooper, *An Unscheduled Visit*, 36–37.

⁶⁵ A future article will investigate in more depth the construction, voyages, and the fate of Japan's three trans-Pacific vessels from this time.

Vizcaíno also framed his direct travel from New Spain to Japan as a favor to the shogunate, thereby downplaying the route's potential as a commercial crossing. Vizcaíno's *San Francisco* was the first vessel to sail directly from the Americas to Japan, the first time a Spanish vessel sailed west across the Pacific without Manila as the destination. Vizcaíno reported that while Salinas could have sent him the usual way, the viceroy opted not to out of consideration for the long journey and the danger posed by the Dutch near the Philippines. A direct route avoided risking "the return of the silver and the value of the ship and all the rest that we bring from the Marqués in the name of my king and lord."⁶⁶ In other words, Vizcaíno journeyed directly to Japan as a special favor rather than to establish regular commerce. As with the purchase of the ship, Vizcaíno's framing foreshadowed ongoing Spanish ambivalence about sailing anywhere aside from Manila, and its proprietary attitude toward the Pacific.

The Dutch remained a point of contention, as did other familiar issues. Vizcaíno repeatedly denounced the Dutch as heretical and rebellious subjects, naming their expulsion as a precondition for any sustained commerce between New Spain and Japan. Vizcaíno also advocated on behalf of the missionary community, noting the growing Tokugawa distrust of their intentions. Furthermore, Vizcaíno could not have endeared himself to the Tokugawa through his resolve to impose Spanish court etiquette in Japan. He flatly refused to prostrate himself as requested, on both knees with his head and hands pressed to the floor. Nor would he remove his shoes or arms in Hidetada's presence. When shogunate officials protested, Vizcaíno threatened to leave without delivering his letters from the viceroy. The shogunate relented, though in contrast to Vivero's meeting two years before, Hidetada remained silent during this audience.⁶⁷ Ieyasu made similar accommodations, and

⁶⁶ Gil, *Hidalgos y samurais*, 319 (*Relación*, 3:12).

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 325–329 (*Relación*, 5:7–12).

likewise did not speak directly to Vizcaíno. After the general departed, the elder Tokugawa spoke on friendly terms with the friars Pedro Bautista and Luis Sotelo, who were also in attendance.⁶⁸

Though commerce, religion, foreign relations, and protocol divided host and guest, there was temporary agreement on the matter of soundings. Vivero had argued for their necessity while in Japan, and Ieyasu remained amenable to action facilitating Spanish traffic. For Vizcaíno, the soundings were a prudent support measure for any Spanish ship sailing to, from, or past the archipelago, be it directly from New Spain or via the existing route out of Manila. Soundings would also help prepare his expedition in search of the islands Rica de Oro and Rica de Plata, though he did not mention this purpose. Vizcaíno did not lack for gall, requesting permission to survey Japan's coast "from Nagasaki to Akita," that is, the archipelago's entire Pacific coastline from southwestern Kyushu to the northern tip of Honshu.⁶⁹ Vizcaíno agreed to remit copies of the resulting charts to Hidetada and Ieyasu. The shogunate granted this request, and in Vizcaíno set out north overland in fall 1611.⁷⁰

Vizcaíno's road north brought him to Date Masamune's stronghold in Sendai, furthering ties between the Spanish ambassador, the northern daimyo, and the friar who helped mediate their conversations, Luis Sotelo. The three had first become acquainted in Edo. Vizcaíno's report logged a chance encounter with Date in the streets of that city in summer 1611. Sotelo accompanied Vizcaíno during much of the latter's time in Japan, including this excursion north. While hosting the duo in Sendai, Date spoke of his interest in commerce with New Spain, and potentially building a ship of his own. Date's large Ōshū domain, anchored by his castle town in

⁶⁸ Ibid., 338–39 (*Relación*, 6:8–9).

⁶⁹ Ibid., 341–42 (*Relación*, 6:11).

⁷⁰ Ibid., 348–350 (*Relacion*, 8:1–6).

Sendai, had easy access to the northeast Kuroshio Current used by the Spanish in the eastward crossing to the Americas. Conversely, the ports in his domain could also serve as safe harbor for Spanish vessels harangued by inclement weather. All three men reconvened again in Edo following the completion of Vizcaíno's survey work in the north, continuing a pattern of sporadic meetings among the daimyo, the general, and the friar.

In time, even Vizcaíno's sounding activities became a flashpoint of Tokugawa discontent, catalyzed in part by infighting in the archipelago among the "Southern Barbarians." European political prejudice was not new to Japan. The Portuguese and Spanish, though both subject to Habsburg rule, coexisted as uneasy rivals rather than allies or partners in Japan. The Portuguese had traded with Japan out of Macao for decades, and resented the more recent growth in trade between Japan and Manila. This commercial rivalry paralleled jealousy among the religious orders active in Asia. Most notably, the Jesuits who had arrived in Japan in conjunction with the expansion of the Portuguese Indies complained of the intrusions of Spanish Franciscans operating out of the Philippines.⁷¹ The arrival of merchants from the rebellious, and Protestant, Low Countries led to Iberian denunciation of the Dutch and vice-versa. England was no different, and in this instance Tokugawa advisor Will Adams (now a twelve-year veteran of Japanese politics) raised suspicions about the motivations underlying Vizcaíno's surveying activities. Adams framed Vizcaíno's actions as a breach of sovereignty, stating that no European monarch would let a foreign power survey his or her coastline. This line of argument spoke directly to Ieyasu's concern with establishing and maintaining Tokugawa prerogative in foreign

⁷¹ For an introduction to the papal bulls regulating missionary activity in Japan, and the tension between orders, see João Paulo Oliveira e Costa y Pedro Correia, "Felipe III y la disputa luso-castellana por Japón [Philip III and the Luso-Castilian Dispute over Japan]," in *Las vecindades de las Monarquías Ibéricas*, ed. José Javier Ruiz Ibáñez (Madrid: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 2013), 334–39.

relations. Vizcaíno's counter claims and denouncement made little difference, especially in the absence of a concrete commitment to trade with New Spain. By summer 1612, it was time to go.

In August of that year, Vizcaíno received replies from Ieyasu and Hidetada to the viceroy. These letters differed markedly from the licenses that traveled with Vivero earlier. The text was longer and didactic. Whereas Ieyasu's missive to the Duke of Lerma impassively granted permission, this letter sternly laid out what the shogunate expected going forward. Ieyasu and Hidetada reaffirmed their invitation to Spanish ships, but declared that missionaries were not welcome on Japan's shores. Ieyasu paraphrased language employed by Hideyoshi decades earlier: "Now, our realm is the land of the gods. Since antiquity, we have honored the gods and revered the Buddha...The laws in practice in your country have an altogether different character, and have no connection to our realm's [teachings]." ⁷² A group of Franciscans, the omnipresent Sotelo among them, translated the document (faithfully) into Spanish at Vizcaíno's behest. ⁷³ Clearly the tide was turning against the Christian mission, but not yet to the point that the Tokugawa were willing to abandon their interests in New Spain.

Nevertheless, the fissure with Vizcaíno yawned wide enough that the Tokugawa response diverged into two paths. Vizcaíno left first, departing Japan in search of Rica de Oro and Rica de Plata. This was the general's primary mission, undertaking an expedition that the Viceroyalty had been mustering support for over multiple years. ⁷⁴ Officials in New Spain had debated whether or not the endeavor was better pursued from Japan or New Spain; Tokugawa overtures

⁷² Murakami, *Zōtei ikoku nikki-shō* (Tokyo: Sunnansha, 1929), 65–66. The Japanese reads: “抑吾邦者神國也。自開以來、敬神尊佛...貴國之所用法、其趣甚異也、於吾邦無其緣歟。”

⁷³ The translation was made in Uraga on 1612.08.31. For a transcription of the Spanish, see *DNS* 12-9, pp. 964–967.

⁷⁴ See Gil, *Hidalgos y samurais*, 271–278 for an introduction to and analysis of the initiative in search of the islands.

conveniently settled the issue.⁷⁵ Vizcaíno chased the mythical islands for two months, traveling as far north as forty-two degrees latitude, near the island of Hokkaido, before a storm crippled the *San Francisco*, forcing a decision about whether to risk a crossing to Alta California or simply retreat to Japan. Vizcaíno ordered the latter, and his vessel returned to Uraga and an uncertain welcome in late 1612.

The Tokugawa initiative fared worse. The shogunate constructed a second ocean-going vessel that summer, loading it down with merchants, cargo, and their chosen representative, Sotelo. The friar occupied the awkward position of being a missionary charged with delivering a warning against the arrival of additional missionaries. Evidently, the Franciscan's experience negotiating between the shogunate and secular Spanish authorities still recommended him to the Tokugawa. What documentation he carried on behalf of the Tokugawa is unclear. Ostensibly, the letters Vizcaíno had translated into Spanish that August were for Vizcaíno to bring back to New Spain. Perhaps the Tokugawa gave Sotelo copies, or perhaps Vizcaíno was made to return them (though no such insult is present in the record of Vizcaíno's trip). In short, it is difficult to determine if the Tokugawa intended this second voyage as an alternative or an addition to Vizcaíno, or if they just wanted to send another ship to trade in Acapulco. It is even possible they deputized Sotelo both because of his familiarity with matters and as an easy means of sending a missionary out of the country. Regardless, the planned voyage tangled the web of diplomatic and commercial outreach still further, and drove a wedge between Vizcaíno and Sotelo that was never remedied. The two men would argue over whom each represented or did not represent, and would fight over the letters and gifts sent from Japan to the confusion and consternation of Spanish authorities in Europe and the Americas.

⁷⁵ Ibid., 276–277.

Flaws in the second Tokugawa vessel gave Vizcaíno and Sotelo ample time to argue with each other in Japan as well. The ship, named the *San Sebastián* in Spanish records, launched in September 1612 but foundered within a day. Vizcaíno commented on the vessel prior to his own departure, and dismissed it as not up to the journey.⁷⁶ Most onboard survived, Sotelo among them, but the ship's sinking remained an expensive fiasco. Although Vizcaíno had reimbursed the shogunate the value of the *Buena Ventura* (as determined by Spanish authorities), Ieyasu had lost two ocean-going ships in three years. Beyond time and resources, each vessel required the integration of foreign shipbuilding design and technology still unfamiliar in the archipelago, to say nothing of the navigational expertise required to attempt the journey.

The year 1612 closed on an uneasy and uncertain note. Ieyasu needed to decide whether to send another ship to New Spain. So far, the Japanese had followed the Spanish schedule, mounting voyages but once a year in a window stretching from late summer to early fall. The *San Sebastián*'s foundering left Ieyasu a few months to contemplate his commitment to the project. Vizcaíno found himself stranded, without the means to provision his vessel and attempt another crossing. The Tokugawa refused to issue him a loan to fund repairs, signaling their continued displeasure with the ambassador. Sotelo returned in earnest to his missionary activities. In 1613, he focused his attentions in Edo, ignoring at his peril the recent Tokugawa prohibitions against missionary activity in land under its direct control.⁷⁷ All the while, the shogunate's initial outreach to imperial Spain remained unanswered.

⁷⁶ The crew may have been inexperienced. There were likely some onboard with experience in open-ocean sailing, but Vizcaíno must have retained the bulk of his crew for his own return journey.

⁷⁷ The Tokugawa and their house vassals directly governed less than a third of Japan, though this area did include both Edo and Nagasaki. Thus the 1612 prohibition did not apply to the domains of daimyo such as Date.

Vizcaíno's mission to Japan accomplished little, constrained by the Spanish chain of command, and hampered by the ambassador's failure to make a good impression. Vizcaíno repaid Spanish debts, but disagreements and tension soured relations, while the weather foiled pursuit of his other mission. It is telling that the viceroy of New Spain put as much stock in searching for hypothetical islands as in cementing relations with existing ones.⁷⁸ Moreover, Vizcaíno demanded much and offered little, requiring the expulsion of Spain's enemies and the protection of its missionaries without committing to commerce. Finally, both the general's forced return and the *San Sebastián*'s short life at sea reminded all involved of the cost and perils of crossing the Pacific.

Still, the route remained a possibility for those who might pursue it. Ieyasu needed a ship. Vizcaíno needed a patron. Sotelo, as it turned out, would need someone to get him out of jail. Fortunately, there was a figure willing and able to give all three what they wanted.

Outsourcing Diplomacy

A year after the *San Sebastián*'s ignominious departure, sailors, carpenters, and merchants readied the largest Japanese craft yet to attempt the voyage east. The *San Juan Bautista* dwarfed her predecessors, her 500-ton capacity fully four times that of the *Buena Ventura* from three years prior. Built with Japanese cedar and pine, she was a triple-masted galleon in the Spanish style. Nearly two hundred men—sailor and merchant, Japanese and Spanish, missionary and ambassador—prepared to cross the Pacific and once again tether American markets directly to eastern Japan.

⁷⁸ The Spanish also pursued Rica de Oro and Rica de Plata at the expense of a sustained exploration of Alta California, which in fact contained a wealth of gold deposits.

Twelve months had wrought some changes. The *Bautista* sailed from Tsukinoura, a small inlet within Sendai domain, rather than the shogunate's preferred port of Uraga at the mouth of Edo Bay. This time the diplomatic personnel carried letters addressed to leaders religious and secular alike, in New Spain as well as European capitals half a world away. These letters warmly welcomed more missionaries into Japan, bucking the rising tide of Tokugawa suspicion of religious orders and their foreign faith. Most importantly, the ship, the letters, and the men who carried them all—for now—counted Date Masamune, not the Tokugawa, as their patron.

However notable these changes, the emerging Tokugawa order is what continued to frame them, and the venture comprised another iteration in Ieyasu's dozen-year engagement with New Spain through diplomatic trial and error. Sendai lay in northeastern Japan, and Date's ship still carried with it the promise of bringing Spanish goods and vessels to an area closer to the center of Tokugawa control.⁷⁹ The concrete terms Date offered Spain closely tracked those informally agreed upon by Vivero and the Tokugawa themselves. Where they differed—on silver, the Dutch, and missionaries, Date made concessions seemingly favorable to Spanish interests. These differences reflected Tokugawa flexibility as much as Date's initiative and open-mindedness. The shogunate permitted Date to sponsor the voyage in part because he could adopt positions that the Tokugawa could not without reversing previous stances. This diplomatic outsourcing promised maximum flexibility and lowered the risk of compromising the shogunate's dignity.

Over the last decade, the shogunate had implemented similar policies of diplomatic outsourcing to daimyo in geographically advantageous positions. The Sō family mediated

⁷⁹ When the *Bautista* returned to Japan in 1615, it docked at Uraga, near Edo, not in Sendai domain. The extant documents make no mention of the vessel ever returning to Date's domain, though he remained the vessel's recognized owner.

relations with Joseon Korea from Tsushima Island between the Japanese archipelago and the Korean peninsula. The Shimazu clan of Satsuma domain conquered the Ryukyu Kingdom with Tokugawa permission in 1609, and thereafter mediated relations, masters of one polity (Ryukyu) and vassals to another (the Tokugawa). To the north on Hokkaido, Toyotomi Hideyoshi had deputized the lords of Matsumae domain to regulate relations with that island's Ainu population, and the Tokugawa renewed this responsibility. Each "portal" adhered to its own peculiarities and dynamics: the Sō forged certain documents and fudged signatures to grease the wheels of diplomacy; the Shimazu and the shogunate encouraged Ryukyu to continue its tributary relationship to China in order to maintain access to trade and information; the Matsumae handled relations with a people, not a polity, and became increasingly forceful and exploitative as a result.⁸⁰ At the same time, the Tokugawa maintained direct control over Nagasaki, the most important port for foreign commerce.

Date Masamune's direct outreach to the centers of Spanish power adhered to this precedent. For a dozen years, Ieyasu had worked to entice Spanish ships to northeastern Japan and open the commercial gateway to the Americas. Letters to successive governors-general in the Philippines yielded the occasional extra vessel from Manila and the occasional promise to move the matter up Spain's administrative ladder. Efforts to limit the number of Japanese ships via the *shuin* system had consolidated the shogunate's control over commerce but had not sufficiently encouraged a Spanish response. Vivero's shipwreck yielded a mixed bag of terms and conditions with an unauthorized representative, and led to the arrival of an unhelpful authorized representative more interested in mapping the Japanese coast for Spanish ends than

⁸⁰ These relations have been covered in-depth by scholars in Japan and the Anglophone world. For a succinct introduction to the topic in English, see Arano Yasunori, "The Formation of a Japanocentric World Order," *The International Journal of Asian Studies* 2, no. 2 (July 2005), 185–216.

establishing commerce. Vizcaíno was now stranded himself, and by the summer of 1613, Ieyasu's letter to the court in Madrid approached three years unanswered. In Date, the Tokugawa hit upon a surrogate willing to mediate between a reticent commercial and diplomatic partner, and to shoulder the outlay required by the outreach. By taking a step back, the Tokugawa both reinforced and protected their prerogative in foreign affairs while distancing themselves from the cost and risk of embarrassment. Date, for his part, gained a stake in any future commercial activity and the prestige of mediating relations with a foreign power. It was a shrewd, sensible move for both parties.

Unfortunately, the new mission confused the boundaries of authority for Spanish officials trying to make sense of the endeavor. Debates over who represented whom would undercut Date's representatives every step along the way to Seville, Madrid, and the Eternal City.

Date Masamune (1567–1636) was well-positioned geographically, politically, and personally to assume a direct role in relations between Japan and New Spain. 1613 found him just entering middle age, Ieyasu's junior by over two decades, but a dozen years older than Hidetada. Born into the intrigue and military campaigns of the late Sengoku period, Date led skirmishes as a youth and assumed the headship of his clan in 1584, two years after the great warlord Oda Nobunaga's death. He swore loyalty to the rising Hideyoshi, but noticeably dragged his heels in helping the latter's forces stamp out resistance in the northeast. Nevertheless, Date deployed to Korea and led troops in both of Hideyoshi's continental campaigns in the 1590s. Preparations for them necessitated a residence of some months in Kyushu, where Date may have come across foreign merchants and missionaries firsthand. Date supported Ieyasu at the decisive Battle of Sekigahara in 1600, and the Tokugawa confirmed him as the first lord of the newly created Sendai domain, which overlapped extensively with the old imperial province of Mutsu,

or Ōshū.⁸¹ The domain was extensive, one of the largest in the archipelago in terms of area and agricultural production, and the largest in the north.⁸² As Ieyasu had done with Edo, Date established and built up the town of Sendai after his arrival. The domain also included a long stretch of coastline and easy access to the currents of the North Pacific.

The “king of Ōshū,” as dubbed by Spanish sources, had entertained thoughts of participating in overseas commerce prior to 1613, and possessed both reason and opportunity to do so. The Tokugawa periodically ordered that daimyo attend shogunate leadership in person, a measure that drained daimyo coffers while they traveled and maintained themselves in Edo or Sunpu, allowing the Tokugawa to keep an eye on recent allies and old rivals.⁸³ This peripatetic life put Date into direct contact with Ieyasu, his officials, and key Spaniards such as Sotelo and Vizcaino. As mentioned earlier, Date met both the general and the friar first in Edo, and hosted both (in person and in absentia) at Sendai. Date also called on Ieyasu at Sunpu multiple times, and received formal support for his trade venture in April 1613. The daimyo had also dipped his toes into the waters of foreign commerce the year prior, placing two retainers aboard the ill-fated *San Sebastián*.

⁸¹ Date’s holdings and castles shifted throughout his career before he settled in as the first lord of Sendai under the Tokugawa. However, his base of power always lay in northern Japan. For Date’s move to Sendai see, Kobayashi Seiji, *Date Masamune no kenkyū* [Study of Date Masamune] (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 2008), 202–227.

⁸² Domain holdings were conventionally measured in terms of *koku* (石), a unit of volume—roughly 180 liters—meant to denote the amount of rice necessary to feed a man for a year. In the Tokugawa period, a lord had to control land assessed at over 10,000 *koku* to qualify for daimyo status. Date’s holdings officially amounted to more than 600,000 *koku*, though true production may have been higher. This put Date in select company, although the largest daimyo domain, Kaga, was assessed at over 1 million *koku*. Taken collectively, Japan held roughly 26 million *koku* by this system around 1700, with the Tokugawa and their direct vassals governing about 6.5 million *koku*. See Conrad Totman, *Early Modern Japan* 117–20.

⁸³ These measures developed into the system of alternate attendance (*sankin kōtai*, 参勤交代), by which daimyo spent alternate years in residence at Edo and in their domains, holding to a consistent schedule. Daimyo wives and families remained in Edo as hostages to the shogunate. Ieyasu’s grandson Tokugawa Iemitsu (1604–1651) formalized the practice in the 1630s; in Ieyasu’s time the policy had not yet cohered into a regular system.

Japanese scholars have recently argued that Date may have viewed foreign trade as a means to secure domestic recovery. In 1611, a large earthquake and the ensuing tsunami destroyed much of the domain's coastline, disrupting local commerce and agriculture. The 2011 Tōhoku earthquake and tsunami—and the ensuing meltdowns at the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant—affected a similar area, including present-day Miyagi, Iwate, and Fukushima prefectures. Local and regional recovery efforts in the twenty-first century have encouraged a reexamination of measures taken in the seventeenth. In this line of thought, Date pursued foreign trade in part to swell his treasury and augment his ability to fund public works and rebuild infrastructure in his domain.⁸⁴ This state of affairs helps explain his placing commercial agents on the *San Sebastián* in 1612, and sponsoring construction of the *Bautista* the next year.

Date needed not just money but expertise; fortunately, he found a willing collaborator in Vizcaíno. The daimyo got along well with the general during the latter's initial tenure in Japan. By 1613 Vizcaíno was stranded in Japan and the Tokugawa had refused further financial support, continuing the friction between the general and his hosts. In Date, Vizcaíno found the local support he needed. The two agreed to divvy up responsibility for the design and construction of the ship, the salary of its crew, and ultimate authority over both. The *Bautista* would be Date's ship, unequivocally. However, Vizcaíno would help oversee construction of the vessel and enjoy final say over all crew and passengers on the open water. Date and Vizcaíno were to divide evenly the responsibility for crew salaries; presumably Vizcaíno's half would be paid upon docking in Acapulco. The agreement placed Vizcaíno in charge of the ship's safety and navigation, with an ambiguous role in its commercial activities. The general readily entered

⁸⁴ Hirakawa Arata, "The Great Earthquake in Eastern Japan and the Way We Look at History," *Rekishigaku kenkyū* 884 (October 2011), 2–7.

the agreement, but soon chafed at the direction the venture took as Date developed his diplomatic agenda with the help of another.

By 1613, Fray Luis Sotelo was a veteran of the halting negotiations between Tokugawa Japan and Habsburg Spain. Sotelo was born into a powerful family in Seville in Andalusia, peninsular Spain's commercial and political gateway to the Indies. A younger brother, Sotelo left the business of city politics to his elder sibling and joined the Franciscan order. Seville housed the Casa de Contratación (House of Trade), the imperial institution charged with administering Spain's relations with its growing network of colonies. Growing up in the shadow of the *Casa*, together with his bountiful missionary zeal, instilled in Sotelo a powerful impetus to go abroad, and he departed for the Philippines in 1600. Fascinated with Japan, he practiced the language in Japanese settlements around Manila before embarking for the archipelago in 1603. He did so as part of a trickle of mendicant missionaries who journeyed directly from Manila to Japan even before Pope Paul V authorized the mendicant orders to travel from the Philippines to Japan. The energetic friar made his way up north through Japan from Kyushu. Vivero crossed paths with Sotelo in 1609, and the erstwhile governor-general discovered a man just as, if not more, excited at the prospect of expanding Spain's missionary and commercial relations with Japan. Sotelo helped steer negotiations with the Tokugawa, and as previously noted, Ieyasu intended to send the friar to Spain on the shogunate's behalf.

Sotelo's enthusiasm was a double-edged sword. He worked tirelessly to promote relations between his sovereign and his Japanese hosts, but fell out of favor with authorities every step of the way. Alonso Muñoz replaced him on the *San Buena Ventura*'s 1610 voyage. Sotelo later claimed this was due to illness, but there is evidence that the Franciscans active in Japan objected to the choice and lobbied to have the Franciscan *comisario* Muñoz take his place. Sotelo

remained in Tokugawa good graces long enough to represent the shogunate on the ill-fated *San Sebastián* expedition. That grace was exhausted soon after, when the friar ventured back into Edo. Sotelo established a church in the Tokugawa capital, disregarding the shogunate's prohibition of all missionary activity and churches in territories under its direct control. In summer 1613 Tokugawa authorities destroyed Sotelo's church, located near present-day Asakusa, and imprisoned the friar and his companions, executing many of the latter. The friar had fallen from Tokugawa representative to Tokugawa prisoner in less than year.

Date brought things full circle when he successfully petitioned for Sotelo's release in August 1613. The friar's reemergence served the interest of prisoner, jailer, and petitioner alike. Sotelo presumably preferred freedom to incarceration. Beyond personal liberty, Date's commercial outreach and diplomatic gambit fit Sotelo's view of Japanese-Spanish relations, and provided an opportunity to aggressively expand the Japanese mission aggressively in the northeast.⁸⁵ The friar had both negotiated commercial terms with the Tokugawa and felt the sting of their growing distrust of missionaries; he recognized that trade might be the only path to securing religious tolerance. Working with Date, Sotelo also had the chance to shape the tone and tenor of the embassy in a manner more palatable to Spain, advocate for the Japan mission at the highest levels, and advance his own position in that mission.

By releasing Sotelo for Date's endeavor, the shogunate benefitted from his experience and expertise without tethering itself to the friar directly. Sotelo remained useful, but his recent actions also made him an annoyance. Remanding him to Date leveraged Sotelo's expertise to

⁸⁵ By the 1610s, Jesuits and the mendicant orders had a presence in Tōhoku, but their numbers paled in comparison to Kyushu. Opening a new front in the northeast avoided the convoluted politics and tension surrounding Nagasaki. A commercial and missionary nexus in Tōhoku may have engendered the same tension over time, though Sotelo undoubtedly remained optimistic on this front.

maximum effect while minimizing potential fallout from failure. This replicated the logic behind Date's involvement as well. If the daimyo succeeded in attracting Spanish trade, all the better. Either way, Ieyasu avoided having to outfit another ship. Similarly, if Sotelo facilitated the mission's success, his release from jail would have been worth it. If he failed, Ieyasu would be conveniently rid of him. For his part, Date gained the services of the shogunate's chosen representative for his own high-profile mission. Sotelo may have been an imperfect vessel, but he remained the most qualified candidate to guide the mission. The friar was arguably more conversant in both the Tokugawa and Habsburg political systems than anyone else in Japan.

Vizcaino and Sotelo's involvement eased logistics and provided a reservoir of relevant experience, but Date's mission hinged on the support of the shogunate. The daimyo secured it through a series of meetings with Ieyasu as well as Mukai Shōgen (1582–1641), the Tokugawa Admiral of the Fleet (*funate bugyō*, 船手奉行). Records of these meetings exist, though details on their contents are scarce. The presence of Date retainers on the *San Sebastián* clearly signals both the daimyo's interest and a central authority amenable to his participation in trade with Spain. Ieyasu granted Date permission to mount his own diplomatic expedition in May 1613, and Mukai mediated relations between the daimyo and the Tokugawa hegemon.⁸⁶ Mukai had also worked with Will Adams to build the *Buena Ventura*, and appears to have aided in the *Bautista*'s construction as well, sending workers north to Sendai.⁸⁷ Ultimately, ten Mukai retainers sailed on the *Bautista* to Acapulco, cementing the shogunate's permission, participation, and oversight.⁸⁸

⁸⁶ Gonoï, *Hasekura Tsunenaga*, 47-51. Date's visit to Ieyasu in Sunpu is logged in the *Tokugawa jikki*, Shintei zōho kokushi taikēi, vol. 38 (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kobunkan, 1998), 620–21 (Keichō 18.04.10–19, 1613.05.29–06.07).

⁸⁷ Ibid., 46. Date wrote Mukai thanking him for sending carpenters to aid in the *Bautista*'s construction. See *Date chike kiroku* vol. 2, Sendai-han shiryō taisei (Sendai: Hōbundō, 1972), 587 (Keichō 18.03.10, 1613.04.29).

⁸⁸ Ibid., 55.

While Date worked with Vizcaíno and Mukai to build his ship, he consulted with Sotelo to craft his message. The friar helped shape the content, scale, and tone of Date's self-introduction to Spanish officials. The daimyo's choice of correspondents reflected Sotelo's influence, and the final list grew quite long: the viceroy of New Spain, King Philip III, Pope Paul V, the heads of the Franciscan order in New Spain and Rome, and the city of Seville, Sotelo's hometown. Sotelo also may have been responsible for convincing Date to send messages and messengers all the way to Europe, rather than contenting himself with leadership in New Spain. A Jesuit active in the area around Sendai reported that his mendicant rival successfully amplified the scope of the enterprise by manipulating one of Date's Christian retainers and threatening to back out of the endeavor if it did not venture on to Europe.⁸⁹ The animosity between religious orders may have tinged this account of Sotelo's actions and means of influence. Even so, the idea was not so radical. Ieyasu had established the precedent of sending a message to Spain three years earlier. Furthermore, in financial terms the bulk of the mission's expense resided in the cost of building, outfitting, and loading the ship. Once in New Spain, it was presumed that the mission's hosts would assume the cost of hospitality, as indeed proved to be the case.

Having decided whom Date would write, the friar and daimyo needed to decide what to say. The two settled on familiar terms in a new package. Date, no doubt with Sotelo's input, systemically excised or addressed the issues that had divided Vivero and the shogunate three years prior. Date's letters made no mention of silver, miners, or mining technology. He vowed to refuse any Dutch who might be foolish enough to arrive in his domain. Most importantly, the daimyo welcomed missionaries with open arms, and promised them every courtesy when they arrived. Date framed his outreach first and foremost as a request for missionaries. He further

⁸⁹ Ibid., 59-62.

welded his petition to a personal narrative of discovery and wonder at the word of God, facilitated by a certain Franciscan friar. While unable to convert due to “present difficulties,” he expressed his desire that all subjects in his domain convert to Christianity.⁹⁰ This pledged piety, however teasing, reinforced a position of deference the Tokugawa could not and would not adopt. Whereas Ieyasu had impassively granted permission to Philip’s subject, Date respectfully petitioned for the king’s favor as one beholden (if not quite committed) to the same God. The daimyo adopted the humility that the shogunate could not afford to inhabit. Date’s entire gambit rested on this pivot from sovereign to subject, and the paradoxical flexibility granted by the latter position within a framework where the shogunate had to maintain the image of absolute authority.

Proclamations of a faith deferred dressed up a set of familiar provisions. The requested missionaries needed some means of transportation, and Date happily offered his own vessel in addition to any ships New Spain might send on its own. The daimyo’s proposals for managing the anticipated traffic of ships, men, and supplies echoed the less problematic items Vivero had negotiated before: permission to dock at any port in Sendai, fair treatment of all Spanish, fair prices for any provisions, land set aside for a trading station and residences, and the right of the Spanish to govern their own affairs. This “term sheet” was separate from Date’s letter of introduction, and more matter-of-fact in tone. What had been the basis of Vivero’s proposition to the Tokugawa shogunate was now offered by a Japanese daimyo for the approval of the Spanish monarch. Sotelo played a formative role in both exchanges, though in the intervening three years the offer and recipient had switched.

⁹⁰ Date Masamune to Philip III, 1613.10.17. *SDS* doc. 140.

Date's apparent concessions to Spanish sentiments diminished under scrutiny. For one, the Dutch had not yet ventured as far north as Sendai, nor had they expressed any interest in doing so.⁹¹ Date made this paper promise knowing full well there was little chance he would need to enforce it. Similarly, the nascent state of Sendai's mining industry made it easy to omit any mention of the precious metal and the capricious terms its potential extraction had imposed on earlier talks. In contrast, warmly inviting missionaries was a true departure from the shogunate's stated priorities. Still, one daimyo mediating relations with one foreign community would be easier for the Tokugawa to manage than the collection of interests entrenched in Kyushu. There is no proof that Date cleared each provision with Ieyasu or Mukai, so it is possible they remained in the dark. However, Mukai's involvement in the planning and the presence of his retainers on a voyage prominently featuring a zealous Franciscan monk would have demanded a risky policy of selective silence that is difficult to accept. In any event, the 1612 prohibition on Christianity applied only to direct Tokugawa holdings; technically Date was still free to invite as many missionaries as he wanted. It is tempting to speculate that the Tokugawa limited the 1612 edict at least in part to grant Date additional flexibility. Such speculation, however appealing, remains precisely that.

Date's decision to send a message all the way to Spain was not new, but his decision to send a Japanese representative along with the letters departed from Tokugawa precedent. The role played by Japanese representatives in the back and forth between the Tokugawa and Habsburg administrations defies easy explanation. In 1610, the Kyoto merchant Tanaka Shōsuke

⁹¹ The situation changed in 1642, when a VOC expedition charged with searching out the islands Rica de Oro and Rica de Plata—evidently as appealing to the Dutch as they had once been to Vizcaíno—sought provisions in Nambu, a domain north of Sendai. A Dutch vessel involved received a warm welcome when it put into harbor on their way up, but ten men were captured and sent to Edo after coming ashore on the return voyage south. See, Reinier H. Hesselink, *Prisoners from Nambu: Reality and Make-Believe in 17th-Century Japanese Diplomacy* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2002).

was treated as something like an ambassador while in New Spain. The famous Nahuatl chronicler Chimalpahin described him as such, and mentioned that Tanaka was honored by the viceroy during his stay.⁹² Tanaka is mentioned in Tokugawa records, and he again journeyed to New Spain on the *Bautista*.⁹³ But his name did not appear on outward-facing Tokugawa documents, most notably the 1610 letters sent to Lerma that did mention Sotelo and Muñoz. Tanaka appears to have assumed practical responsibilities such as establishing ties with local officials and perhaps overseeing the sale and transfer of Japanese goods. These responsibilities did not require a formal diplomatic role in Tokugawa eyes, despite the merchant's treatment as such while abroad. Instead, Ieyasu's letter outlined his own thoughts, his seal legitimated the document, and the named Franciscans could elaborate if the Spanish court had any questions.

Date extended this logic further. Sotelo still featured prominently. Date's letters mentioned Sotelo repeatedly by name, assigned him a personal role in the daimyo's spiritual awakening, and entrusted the friar with "the details."⁹⁴ Aside from the flirtation with Christianity, Date's treatment of Sotelo paralleled Ieyasu's. However, Date also mentioned—though not by name—two retainers who would journey to New Spain, and a third who was charged to continue on to the courts of Madrid and Rome.⁹⁵ Practically speaking, this circumstance ensured a higher chance of a reply, or at least a report back. Letters were meant to

⁹² Domingo Francisco de San Antón Muñón Chimalpahin Cuauhtlehuanitzin, *Annals of His Time : Don Domingo de San Antón Muñón Chimalpahin Quauhtlehuanitzin*, trans. James Lockhart, Susan Schroeder and Doris Namala (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2006).171–175.

⁹³ Following his return to Japan in 1611, Tanaka presented purple felt cloth to Ieyasu at Sunpu. See *Tokugawa jikki*, 561 (Keichō 16.09.22, 1611.07.10).

⁹⁴ See, for example, Date's letters to Philip III, the Viceroy of New Spain, and the Director-General of the Franciscan Order in Rome, all dated 1613.10.17. (*SDS* docs. 140, 70, 142, respectively).

⁹⁵ The content and form of Date's letters are examined in more depth in the following chapter.

prompt a reply, but the document itself journeyed one way. Barring death or catastrophe, a personal representative traveled roundtrip. In three years, Ieyasu's letter had not yet garnered a response, nor had the letter-bearer, Muñoz, returned. By sending a personal retainer, Date raised the probability of receiving some sort of response, in contrast to the silence frustrating the Tokugawa.

There was also a symbolic dimension to the appointment of a Japanese representative. In his letters, Date charged the third envoy with “delivering the letters to Your Majesty,” alongside Sotelo's mission to speak on the daimyo's behalf and hammer out the details of any agreement. Date thus assigned communication of intent to Sotelo and symbolic action to his own retainer. Unlike Ieyasu, Date adopted a respectful, referential tone to both the secular (Philip) and religious (Paul) leadership of Catholic Europe. The Tokugawa sent a document granting permission, but Date opted to dispatch a physical stand-in to petition favor and demonstrate conviction. In effect, Date sent a Spaniard to be his mouth and a Japanese retainer to be his heart. The daimyo already had a chatty friar, but who might serve as his symbolic representative?

The “King of Ōshū” selected Hasekura Tsunenaga (支倉常長, 1571–1622), a trusted retainer, but also one he could afford to lose. He embodied the personal ties, complicated familial politics, and varying fortunes of minor retainers in an age of political turbulence. Hasekura was born to Yamaguchi Tsunenari but was adopted by Tsunenari's older brother Hasekura Tokimasa, who lacked an heir. Tokimasa later fathered male heirs, and in 1596 Tsunenaga became the head of a Hasekura branch family. A few years Date's junior, Hasekura served his lord from a young age as an envoy and mediator of local disputes.⁹⁶ Both Hasekura and his uncle fought under Date's banner in Korea, reinforcing the defense of Busan and guarding the subsequent Japanese

⁹⁶ Ganoi, *Hasekura Tsunenaga*, 16.

retreat. Hasekura married multiple times and fathered four children, while his holdings ranked him as a mid-level retainer. These biographical details are scant, but sketch out the life of a loyal, capable, if unremarkable, vassal of the new Sendai domain and its founder.

Family scandal conspired to make Hasekura expendable. Hasekura's birth father Tsunenari was found guilty of fraud, and Date ordered that he commit *seppuku* (切腹, literally "cutting the belly," a form of ritual suicide) for his crimes. Given away for adoption or not, the sins of the father became the sins of the son. Date's writ ordering Tsunenari's execution also ordered Hasekura's expulsion, condemning him to the life of a *rōnin* (浪人, masterless samurai). The extant execution and expulsion order omits the year, but upon surveying the circumstantial evidence, Gonoï Takashi postulates that Date meted out his verdict in 1612.⁹⁷ If this is true, the clan's fall came just as Date began to solidify plans to build the *Bautista* and dispatch a mission to Spain. Appointing a disgraced but competent retainer offered Date the best of both worlds. If Hasekura succeeded in establishing trade with Spain, Date could credibly welcome him back into the fold. Conversely, if Hasekura failed or met misfortune along the way, the daimyo only lost an already-disgraced retainer. It appears that Date reestablished Hasekura and his family on a smaller plot of land in spring 1613 in anticipation of the latter's service.⁹⁸

By summer 1613, Date had assembled the necessary personnel and secured permission for his venture from the Tokugawa. Preparations, and the relationships undergirding them,

⁹⁷ This debate is covered in Gonoï, *Hasekura Tsunenaga*, 7-8, and 65-72. There is an alternate theory that Tsunenari was executed up to ten years earlier. Gonoï sifts through the dates, details, and format of related documents at length, but the most direct evidence comes from a 1619 letter by the Jesuit missionary Jeronimo Angelis, active around Sendai at the time. Angelis, no friend to the Franciscans, related that Date selected Hasekura to head the mission a few months after his father's execution. Angelis also stated that Hasekura's role in the mission spared him the same fate as his father. For more information see Satō Ken'ichi, "'Hasekura Tsunenaga tsuihō monjo' no nendai nit suite [A Note on the Date of the 'Hasekura Tsunenaga Expulsion Document']," *Sendai-shi hakubutsukan chōsa kenkyū hōkoku* 8 (1988).

⁹⁸ This timeline and its implications reproduces Gonoï's logic, cited above.

proceeded in line with established character. Date continued coordinating with Mukai, who lent aid to the construction efforts and sent men to journey on the *Bautista*. Vizcaíno eventually soured on the enterprise, alleging that Date reneged on their original terms and chafing at Sotelo's growing influence in the diplomatic sphere. The chronicle of Vizcaíno's misadventure in Japan concluded by noting that the general "embarked as a passenger" rather than a leader.⁹⁹ Sotelo continued to be a volatile, outspoken asset. Date secured his release from prison in August, and soon after the friar helped draft Date's letters. Documents mention Hasekura, but none ascribe to him much influence in preparations for the voyage. Vizcaíno's anger, Sotelo's agitation, and Hasekura's silence would all continue across the water.

The ship launched out of Tsukinoura (near present-day Ishinomaki City) on 28 October, 1613. The vessel measured over 35 meters long, almost 11 meters wide, and 28 meters tall. Date records state that the ship was full of "hundreds" of containers of merchandise, while Vizcaíno noted that construction and provisioning continued until the date of launch. Joining Hasekura, Sotelo, and Vizcaíno were a handful of other Date retainers, Mukai's ten hand-picked men, roughly forty Spaniards (*nanbanjin*, 南蛮人) and a large number of merchants.

All told, merchants, crew, and leadership numbered 180 men. Vizcaíno went out to Japan like a lion but was coming back a lamb. Sotelo, now on his third try, finally had his chance to sail eastward. Date had built his ship, and through his efforts, the Tokugawa hoped to force an answer to a question they had been asking for a decade.

Conclusion – Mixed Currents

Date's mission was not a singularity but the outgrowth of an iterative process of diplomacy pursued by the Tokugawa since the turn of the seventeenth century. The *Bautista* set

⁹⁹ Gil, 383.

out as the third ship to sail for New Spain, not the first. Nor was Date the first to send word to the monarchy in Madrid. Ieyasu and Hidetada reached out a few years prior, after a decade of navigating Spanish colonial administration. Date built upon previous efforts by sending a Japanese retainer to accompany his missives to Europe. Here he struck new ground, as Hasekura became one of the very few Japanese to reach Europe prior to the nineteenth century, and the only one to petition a European monarch directly on behalf of a political power in Japan.¹⁰⁰

The daimyo's gambit took place within the pliant framework of Tokugawa foreign relations. The shogunate sought control over the archipelago's entanglements abroad, but was flexible in the pursuit of this objective. Control could assume the form of direct administration, as with the archipelago's mines and the port of Nagasaki; it could assume the form of licensing, as with the adoption of the *shuin* system for merchants foreign and domestic; it could also assume the form of delegating mediation to well-positioned and ambitious daimyo, as happened in the shogunate's relationship with Ryukyu (via Satsuma), Korea (via Tsushima), and Ezo (via Matsumae). The dynamics of these relations differed, and the autonomy granted the daimyo involved introduced the potential for friction.¹⁰¹ However, a degree of regional autonomy could further foreign relations without unduly risking domestic order. This autonomy allowed Date to frame his mission in a religious and diplomatic manner the Tokugawa shogunate was unwilling to adopt. If successful, daimyo and shogunate alike stood to gain from the development of

¹⁰⁰ The Tenshō embassy had traveled to Europe thirty years prior, but the mission was structured around building support for Jesuit activities in Japan rather than negotiating a more formal political and commercial relationship between Japan and European sovereigns. Put another way, Hasekura was the first Japanese to bring terms on behalf of his sovereign to a European polity. Hasekura was himself accompanied by a small contingent of Japanese all the way to Rome.

¹⁰¹ "Friction" took many forms. The best-known example was the forgery committed by the Sō family to smooth over relations between the shogunate and the royal court in Korea. The Satsuma conquest of the Ryukyu kingdom provides another notable example.

foreign trade in eastern Japan. Date altered Tokugawa tactics but adhered to the same strategy: establish foreign commerce wherever possible in a manner that maintained the shogunate's dignity and reinforced its hegemony.

These collective efforts by the Tokugawa and Date enjoin us to reconsider Japan's relationship with Europe, particularly Catholic Europe, in the seventeenth century. Tokugawa outreach to Spain, persistent and prolonged, challenges a narrative defined by European discovery and expulsion. Ieyasu pursued relations with Spain more doggedly than he did with any other recent arrival from Europe. The Portuguese, Spanish, Dutch, and English all came to Japan. But the Japanese reached out directly to (New) Spain. The shogunate sent letters early and often to the governor-general in the Philippines encouraging ships from the Americas. Ieyasu lowered ship quotas to appease concerns in Manila. He consistently invited Spanish vessels up into the Tokugawa heartland. When a tempest delivered Vivero ashore, the Tokugawa delivered him back to New Spain on a Japanese vessel, complete with a message for the top of the Spanish imperial hierarchy. Throughout, the shogunate proceeded with measured confidence and from the position of granting favors, not requesting them. These actions demonstrate the long reach of Tokugawa influence and ambition, and prompt the question of how Spain would react to a Japanese polity with the means and desire for commercial expansion.

The implications ripple through world history as well. Tokugawa and Date entreaties marked Japan as the only polity besides Spain dispatching vessels to trade across the Pacific during the so-called Age of Discovery. A succession of firsts punctuates histories of discovery—first circumnavigation, first landfall, first flag planted—most often at the hands of Europeans. If firsts are to be one of our criteria, then Japan was the first society in global history to pursue a commercial relationship across the world's largest natural barrier. Spain regularly crossed the

ocean, but perceived of the Pacific as a mercantilist site of intra-imperial exchange, a route to be guarded and maintained. The Pacific was an ocean for Spanish ships to cross between Spanish ports. The crown's answer to how to trade with Asia was to colonize a small slice of it and control the route between. The Tokugawa also focused on control, but played a different game. Ieyasu pursued foreign trade wherever he might find it, and looked to weld that trade into a system of relations undergirding Tokugawa authority. Date's embassy adhered to this model.

The *Bautista* departed Japan as the best-equipped venture to date. Date dispatched a larger vessel than the two before, entrusted to capable navigators along a known route, sent knowledgeable intermediaries and personal representatives, and penned a multitude of letters to authority figures in the Americas and Europe. Most importantly, Tokugawa sanction came with a degree of flexibility, permitting Date to present a different diplomatic voice and represent a different set of intentions. The “King of Ōshū” could ask for the favor of Philip in a manner that the “emperor of Japan” would not. After devoting a dozen years to outreach only to be met with equivocation, and silence, the shogunate let someone else handle organization and execution.

But the vessel was also laden with tension and potentials pitfalls. The viceroy had charged Vizcaíno with returning Japanese merchants to Japan and explaining away the *Buena Ventura* sale. Now a larger ship, with more merchants, was charting a course to Acapulco unbidden, with the erstwhile ambassador reduced to a passenger. Vizcaíno and Sotelo were also now at odds: over control of the ship, control of the mission, and control of the message to be delivered. The vessel's appearance further complicated the diplomatic picture. By fall 1613, multiple paths were active: the viceroy's ambassador returning to Japan, a previously-unknown Japanese daimyo reaching out to Catholic Europe, and the Spanish monarchy finalizing its response to Ieyasu's original missive. The diplomatic channels between the Tokugawa shogunate

and Habsburg monarchy were not well established, but already they were becoming overcrowded.

These complications contributed to the fundamental problem of demonstrating authority and establishing trust, and it is precisely on this point that Tokugawa flexibility and Spanish caution ran aground of each other. The arrival of Date's ship in New Spain did not reinforce Tokugawa commitment, but threw into question just whom Hasekura and Sotelo represented, and by extension, whom the Spanish were dealing with. Through letters, interviews, and reports, officials attempted to triangulate the relationship between the *Bautista's* passengers, the "King of Ōshū," and the (Tokugawa) "Emperor of Japan." Luis Sotelo shifted between these two Japanese authorities in his efforts to gain favor and secure an agreement in Spain, but his attempts to redraw the lines of authority only succeeded in blurring them. The following chapter brings these concurrent efforts into focus.

2. Confounding the Court: The Keichō Embassy Departs for Europe

The Keichō Embassy failed not from lack of trying, but from a lack of trust. Geographic, conceptual, and political distance complicated the already difficult task of communication and building trust among the composite parts of Tokugawa Japan and Habsburg Spain. Date's embassy and vessel embodied that challenge. The *San Juan Bautista*'s voyage to New Spain spoke to the shogunate's mounting frustration at the lack of a reply from Spain and Tokugawa's willingness to entrust outreach to an auxiliary power. However, the ship's appearance in Acapulco caused a new wave of distrust to ripple through Spanish officialdom and precipitated Philip III's rejection of trade between his American colony and his neighbor in Asia. Rather than bridging gaps the mission pushed the two polities further apart, and as time passed there was less and less reason to bother making up the distance.

This chapter traces the Spanish monarchy's attempts to assess and formulate a response to Tokugawa and Date outreach from 1611 to the early part of 1615, and the impact of Date's embassy on that response. I map the monarchy's initial 1613 resolution to permit Spanish vessels to sail between New Spain and Japan, and its subsequent reversal after the *Bautista* docked in Acapulco in 1614. The Keichō Embassy, rather than representing Japanese authority to Spanish officials, fractured it. The vessel registered as a commercial threat, the reports it brought to New Spain were contradictory, and Date Masamune was an unknown entity. All of these factors undermined the standing of the daimyo's party from the start. Fray Luis Sotelo attempted to overcome the atmosphere of mistrust with a rhetoric of half-truths, claiming to be an "imperial" envoy of the Tokugawa shogunate. Date's letters and reports of Sotelo's Spanish colleagues rebutted this point, and the friar never succeeded in lending the embassy "imperial" credibility.

Instead the crown referred to reports generated by the Keichō Embassy's arrival and travel to come to a final decision on Ieyasu's invitation. Here logistical and geographical friction worked in the monarchy's favor. King and council used the information and opinion produced by layers of administration to decide the matter of direct trade well before Hasekura and Sotelo addressed the king. In this way, deliberations on memorials from the embassy and impressions from officials stood in for negotiations or direct appeal. Where the Tokugawa used symbolic distance to enable Date's diplomatic initiative, the Spanish crown used geographic distance to shut that same initiative down. By the time the party officially met with Philip in early 1615, the only questions for the court were what extent to honor and patronize the embassy. But the matter of trade was already decided, as Spain used the daimyo's unwanted advances to justify closing the Pacific to Ieyasu.

Sent to expedite a Spanish response, the Keichō Embassy delayed it by an additional two years. For Tokugawa Ieyasu, the lack of a timely reply from the Spanish monarchy eroded the possibility of expanded commerce at a time when he was quickly losing patience with the evangelizing efforts of Spanish missionaries. By 1613, the shogunate outsourced the capital and labor to Date, and abandoned constructing and provisioning ships across the Pacific. The daimyo's gambit to secure relations between New Spain and his domain doubled as the shogunate's latest attempt to trade with Spain beyond the Philippines after a decade of outreach and encouragement.

Philip had reasons to delay. Any agreement with the Tokugawa or Date required expanding Spain's tenuous Pacific network beyond the Manila galleons.¹ But protection, not

¹ Often, but not always, two ships sailed annually during this time. See William Schurz, *The Manila Galleon* (New York: E.P. Dutton, 1939), 193–94.

expansion, occupied leaders in the wake of English and Dutch expansion into East Asian waters, and continued piracy in the Caribbean. The crown also struggled to curtail smuggling and regulate the amount of American silver bound for Asia.² Governing the Philippines strained administrative and material resources, and the crown received constant supplications from the islands for more men, more ships, and more provisions.³ Traffic between Acapulco and Japan would open New Spain to direct foreign trade and necessitate a significant relative increase in the volume of goods, the number of ships, and the number of sailors committed to Pacific commerce. Ships would sail beyond Spanish authority, into a realm with a reputation for bellicosity and a recent history of political instability. The Tokugawa missive merited a reply, but the shogunate had not made a light request.

Date's mission compounded the problem, and prompted a wave of contradictory correspondence for the monarchy that differed on the level of Tokugawa involvement and approval, and the motivations of an unknown northern daimyo (Date), his stoic Japanese retainer (Hasekura Tsunenaga), and the vocal friar who spoke for both (Luis Sotelo). The Spanish crown referred to Date as the "King of Oshu" (*Rey de Voxu*), and were vexed about how treatment of Date's representatives might impact the monarchy's relationship with Ieyasu, the "Emperor of Japan" (*Emperador del Japón*). This was especially problematic if the "emperor" had not condoned the "king's" legation. Date's murky credibility eroded trust about who the Spanish

² Many of these rules and restrictions were compiled and published in 1680 as *Recopilación de Leyes de las Indias*, nine volumes in total. These restrictions are discussed in more depth in Chapter 4, drawing on Volume 9, Chapter 45 of the *Recopilación*.

³ Examples of such petitions abound in Emma Helen Blair and James Alexander Robertson, eds., *The Philippine Islands, 1493-1803* (Cleveland: A.H. Clark Company, 1903). Volumes XVII–XIX cover the years 1610 to 1620, and will also be discussed in Chapter 4.

were dealing with, who they should be dealing with, and what to expect from Japan's suddenly variegated leadership.

It did not help matters that in 1613 Sotelo and Hasekura were but one of four interrelated diplomatic veins traversing the political and geographic space between Tokugawa Japan and Habsburg Spain. Alonso Muñoz remained in Spain, his 1610 mandate from the Tokugawa unfulfilled as Ieyasu waited for a reply. Sebastián Vizcaíno traveled aboard the *Bautista*, but carried letters of reply from the Tokugawa to the viceroy of New Spain. Confined coexistence alongside Sotelo further degraded the deteriorating relationship between the two men, and the enmity between Vizcaíno and Sotelo followed Date's mission to Spain. Finally, by late 1613 Philip's response embassy to Ieyasu was en route, only to be stalled in New Spain early the next year in reaction to Hasekura and Sotelo's arrival. When the monarchy reconsidered the issue in 1614, the Council of the Indies took into account all four of these diplomatic thrusts, and the discordant reports accompanying them. Thus Spain continued to take its time, even as patience thinned elsewhere.

These competing narratives and the uncertainty accompanying them coalesced around the person and accounts of Fray Luis Sotelo. The friar served as the legation's voice, and his memorials spurred responses from Spaniards on each leg of the mission's journey from Date's Sendai domain to the kingdom of Castile and beyond. Sotelo claimed a direct mandate from Tokugawa Ieyasu, and initially presented himself to Spanish authorities as a Tokugawa envoy accompanying Date's separate legation. The daimyo's Japanese letters to Spanish officials contradicted this account, as did letters by Vizcaíno and others. These claims stretched the truth to varying degrees, at a time when Philip's council had a limited capacity to sort them out. Sotelo accurately warned of Tokugawa impatience and argued for the shogunate's complicity in Date's

endeavor, but the friar never convinced the Spanish that he spoke on behalf of the Tokugawa “emperor.”

The *Bautista*’s arrival spurred a final decision in Madrid on the original Tokugawa invitation even as Hasekura and Sotelo made their way to Spain. The ship spoke more loudly than the men aboard. Conflicting accounts sowed caution, if not distrust, but the arrival of a 500-ton Japanese vessel in Acapulco registered as a distinct threat. By the latter half of 1613, Philip and the Councils of State and Indies had belatedly accepted Ieyasu’s original terms and ruled to permit a single Spanish ship to travel directly between Japan and New Spain. The *San Juan Bautista* pulled into Acapulco in late January 1614, sent by a “king” the Spanish did not know, to a port that was not open, carrying merchants and merchandise from a polity Spain could not exert any measurable control over.

The present exploration of the Spanish government’s deliberations during 1611–1615 raises two additional points. First, concerns over persecution in Japan were not the sole or immediate causes of Madrid’s decision to retreat from direct “correspondence” (*correspondencia*) between eastern Japan and New Spain. Spanish displeasure over Christian persecution played a major role, but so did the perceived commercial threat of Japanese maritime activity. Second, the embassy embodied these threats, even as its principal figures attempted to negotiate on the basis of friendship and faith. Together, the ship and the mission aboard presented their Spanish hosts with the thorny question of how to stonewall Date’s overtures without incurring Tokugawa displeasure at a time when the balance of power between the Spanish East Indies and Japan tilted decidedly in the latter’s favor.

The pages that follow examine the monarchy’s efforts to sort out who to trust, and analyze the way in which Date’s mission—the party, the ship, and the news both carried—

complicated those efforts. Finally, the monarchy’s deliberations reveal why the Tokugawa waited so long for a reply; subsequent chapters will address the consequences of that delay.

Careful Consideration: 1611–1613

The first diplomatic representative sent to Spain was not Sotelo or Hasekura, but the less-known friar Alonso Muñoz. Muñoz departed with Don Rodrigo de Vivero, leaving Uraga on August 1st, 1610 and striking out northeast across Pacific.⁴ The paths of the principals divided soon after their arrival in New Spain. The viceroy Salinas “purchased” the *San Buena Ventura* and sent the Japanese back with Sebastián Vizcaíno, Vivero continued his career in the Americas, and Muñoz continued on to Spain.

The Marquis de Salinas also departed for Europe, bringing an end to his long administrative career in the Indies. Once returned to Spain, he assumed the Presidency of the Council of the Indies. The “Indies” were disparate, encompassing the Spanish holdings in North and South America, the islands of the Caribbean, and the Philippine Islands (named after Philip II, the current king’s father) across the Pacific.⁵ Salinas returned to Spain as one of the king’s most well-informed advisors on any matter concerning trade between Asia and the Americas.⁶ He also maintained a personal connection in the matter, for beyond their gifts to the king, the Tokugawa shogunate had returned his nephew. Salinas’ ambivalent response to Tokugawa outreach—engaging diplomatically but avoiding commercial commitment—presaged the Council and monarchy’s deliberations as they decided what to make of the letters and gifts Muñoz brought to Spain.

⁴ Gono Takashi, *Hasekura Tsunenaga* (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kobunkan, 2003), 32.

⁵ The Portuguese Indies were overseen by the Council of Portugal despite the unification of the crowns.

⁶ Salinas served as viceroy of New Spain twice, and as viceroy of Peru much of the time in between.

Muñoz reached Spain in 1611, and upon receiving the letters he carried the monarchy began deliberating how to respond. The question of administrative jurisdiction was an early issue. Muñoz debriefed Philip III's Council of State, the consultative body charged with advising the king on matters of foreign relations. However, late in 1611 the monarchy brought the Council of the Indies into the fold.⁷ Both bodies drew from the nobility, with the King appointing a President and the President appointing his fellow councilman, who might number up to a dozen at any given time.⁸ State continued to sporadically weigh in, especially once Hasekura and Sotelo arrived in Europe, but Indies took the lead in most discussions. Technically the latter organ oversaw "domestic" policy, tied to the governance of the crown's colonies. However, the monarchy's existing relationship with Japan ran through the Philippines, and any expansion would integrate New Spain, both parts of the Spanish Indies. The shuffling between Councils reflected the underdeveloped institutional architecture for dealing with direct overtures from polities in East Asia.

In May 1612, the Council of the Indies advised Philip "that henceforth communication, trade, and commerce with that kingdom [Japan] be permitted through New Spain, as there is now through Manila."⁹ The Council's decision followed consultation with Muñoz, noted as the one responsible for bringing the Tokugawa letters to the throne's attention. The Council held no reservations on the issue, stating that it "has appeared very suitable to the service of our Lord and to the universal good of these kingdoms [of Spain]."¹⁰ The memorial was direct and brief, and

⁷ Duke of Lerma to the Council of State. 1611.12.12. *DNS* 12-12, CCIII.

⁸ On council organization, see Patrick Williams, *The Great Favourite: The Duke of Lerma and the Court and Government of Philip III of Spain, 1598-1621* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 35–37.

⁹ Consulta del Consejo de Indias (Draft). 1612.05.18. *DNS* 12-12, CCIV.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

left the specifics of implementing the policy for future discussion. In addition to Muñoz's letter and testimony, the Council no doubt considered Vivero's reports of his kind treatment and return to New Spain, not least because a blood relative —Salinas—sat as its head. The early positive response set the stage for a major expansion of Spain's Pacific commercial network and a significant commitment to deeper ties with Japan.

However, what registered as the “universal good” in Madrid manifested as a threat in Manila. The city was no longer Japan's preferred route for contacting the Spanish throne, but it was not out of the loop. News of Vivero's time in Japan, and the resultant traffic in ships, letters, and people between Japan and New Spain soon reached the Philippines. Alarmed by the direction and pace of events, the *audiencia* of Manila, the senior legislative and judicial body of the Philippines, opposed direct American trade with Japan in a 1611 letter to the king. The former viceroy's unilateral decision to send Vizcaíno to Japan provoked the most concern, suggesting to the *audiencia* that the viceroy's administration “wished to open voyages and trade from Japan to New Spain without attention to the great damages and disadvantages that would result from this.”¹¹ The *audiencia* elaborated on these ill consequences, warning of the Japanese proclivity for violence—a common refrain—and the archipelago's growing ties with the Dutch, heretics and rebels in Spanish eyes. Japanese bellicosity and cozy relations with the Dutch were bad enough, but opening the Pacific would pave the way for the Japanese to master its navigation and harass Spanish settlements on the American coast. Piracy and privateering vexed Spanish authorities in the Caribbean; here authorities in the Philippines warned of making the Pacific coastline similarly vulnerable to haranguing by a violent people under the pernicious influence of

¹¹ *Audiencia* letter to Philip III, 1611.7.21. AGI, FILIPINAS,20,R.5,N.40. When the Council of the Indies reviewed this memorial, Salinas would be reading a critique of his own actions as viceroy.

Dutch rebels.¹² The *audiencia* claimed to write in response to the concerns of “the city,” and hoped Philip would rule accordingly.¹³

Drafted in July 1611, the *audiencia*’s remonstrations did not reach Spain until after the Council of the Indies decided in favor of direct ties in May 1612.¹⁴ Conducting diplomacy with Japan was a slow process, but the specific issue of opening trade between the archipelago and New Spain added another level of complication. Beyond the glacial pace of “direct” communication between the shogunate and the monarchy, Madrid needed to review—and wait for—information and opinions from the Philippines and New Spain. The notice from Manila was a case in point; in response the Council paused discussion until more information arrived from the Philippines. In other words, it decided to wait until letters drafted in Manila in 1612 arrived in Spain in 1613 to help decide how to respond to a letter from the Tokugawa written in the summer of 1610.

The political calculus of the appeal also draws attention. The Manila *audiencia* drafted its protestations primarily in terms of the potential damage to New Spain. It claimed to write in response to the concerns presented by “the city,” but did not include specific discussion of Manila’s potential discomfiture. Despite an oft-uneasy relationship with their neighbors, the Spanish Philippines depended on trade with Asian partners, primarily the Chinese diaspora but also with Japan. Manila’s status as the clearinghouse for American silver fueled this trade. The annual Manila galleon was the colony’s lifeline; adding routes out of New Spain to additional ports in Asia would end the Philippines’ monopoly on the America trade. These fears became

¹² For an overview of the piracy vexing Spanish authority in the New World, see Kris E. Lane, *Pillaging the Empire: Piracy in the Americas, 1500-1750* (Armonk: M.E. Sharpe, 1998).

¹³ *Audiencia* letter. AGI,FILIPINAS,20,R.5,N.40

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

explicit in later letters, so much so that the mission—Sotelo foremost among them—found it necessary to argue against them when Date’s embassy arrived on a Japanese vessel two years later.¹⁵ The question of relations with Japan doubled as a question of how to administer the Philippines and role of the Spanish Indies in Asia. The letter also demonstrated that the agenda of Philippines did not always align with their superiors in New Spain or the peninsula when it came to Japan. This dynamic continued throughout the years of the Keichō Embassy.

The *audiencia* rejected expanded relations with Japan on secular grounds, professing concerns about Japanese piracy on the American coast and anxiety about commercial threats. The collapse of relations between Japan and Spain often takes on a religious character, be it discussion of Tokugawa concern over the political threat presented by Catholic missionaries, persecution of the wider Christian community, or infighting and intrigue among religious orders. All of that drew near on the horizon, but this letter made clear the commercial concerns of Spaniards who regarded Japanese experiments with Pacific trade as a threat to their livelihood and that of New Spain. Primed to move forward, the monarchy in Madrid took these concerns seriously enough to table discussion; reports of persecution would soon make them even more cautious. However, the material concerns of whom and what should be allowed across the Pacific continued to weigh on Philip and his councilors as they devised their strategy.

Deliberations on the Tokugawa proposal recommenced one year later, though the delay accomplished little. The expected updates from the Philippines were late, and in the spring of 1613 Alonso Muñoz wrote the Council warning against any further delay in responding to the Tokugawa. Bereft of additional pertinent information, Indies upheld its judgment from the year

¹⁵ Embassy memorial to Philip III and the Council of the Indies (1614?). AGS, EST,LEG,256.1,2. The memorial is also published as *DNS* 12-12, VII.

before and recommended the king order one ship annually depart New Spain for Japan.¹⁶ This time around the king's advisors offered a rationale, perhaps anticipating arguments to the contrary. The Council's *consulta* stated that trade with Japan would not be a true threat because the islands had little to bring back to New Spain; a roundabout way of saying that ties with Japan would not negatively impact the Philippines' commercial lifeline with New Spain. More importantly, commerce with silver-rich Japan would not require draining silver from America, something "that the King desires very much." The ship might even be able to take silver from Japan to the Philippines, easing the silver drain still further. Furthermore, New Spain could serve as an additional channel for missionaries voyaging to Japan. In light of Muñoz's testimony, the letters and gifts from the Tokugawa, and the hospitable treatment offered Rodrigo de Vivero, the Council saw no "disadvantages" arising from one ship traveling to Japan each year.

The Council also embraced a new sense of urgency in response to Muñoz's prodding. They urged the king to rule on the matter soon, so that his own letter and gifts might depart Spain in the next fleet departing Seville for New Spain. Said letter should thank the Tokugawa for their treatment of Vivero and offer of hospitality to Spaniards in Japan. The king should also take especial care to write of his gratitude at the tolerance of missionaries. Finally, proper presents must be selected and purchased for both "that prince [Tokugawa Ieyasu] and his son [Tokugawa Hidetada]." Presents and letters alike were to be entrusted to Muñoz, who would return to Japan on behalf of Philip. The King signaled his agreement, and arrangements began in earnest.¹⁷

¹⁶ Consulta del Consejo de Indias, 1613.5.10. DNS 12-12, CCVI. The next two paragraphs summarize and quote the content of this memorial.

¹⁷ Ibid.

Preparations proceed simultaneously on multiple fronts in May and June 1613. The monarchy drafted the official letter, issued orders to subordinates in New Spain and the Philippines, and decided on appropriate gifts. As this was to be the first official communication between the King of Spain and the ruler of Japan, there was also the important diplomatic question of the latter's title of address.

Philip's orders to his senior representatives in New Spain and the Philippines were straightforward. To Diego Fernández de Córdoba, Marquis of Guadalquivir (1578–1630), Salinas' successor as the viceroy of New Spain, the king summarized the agreed terms and ordered that Guadalquivir be responsible for outfitting and dispatching one ship a year to Japan. The first would include a diplomatic legation of missionaries headed by Muñoz and the letters and presents they carried for the Tokugawa. A ship was to be sent every year after, but "always taking into consideration the state of things in Japan," effectively leaving the matter to the viceroy's discretion.¹⁸ Either way, Guadalquivir was commanded to keep the monarchy abreast of developments. Guadalquivir would also have the option to send the ship directly to Japan or indirectly via the Philippines. As such, the king sent separate contingent orders to the governor-general of the Philippines, commanding that any ship bound for Japan be well-provisioned and promptly sent onward to its final destination.

The monarchy also decided and arranged payment for a slate of gifts for the Tokugawa. An undated list from around this time included prestigious items such as embossed leathers, a dozen paintings of "emperors and empresses," and ten large maps from Antwerp. The crown also elected to send luxuries such as glasswork from Barcelona and Venice, and four boxes of soap,

¹⁸ Philip to Viceroy, 1613.6.17. *DNS* 12-12, CCXI.

two colored.¹⁹ The Tokugawa had sent eight suits of armor and a katana with Muñoz, and there was some debate about how and if to respond in kind.²⁰ A decree by Philip II forbade the presentation of Spanish arms as gifts to foreign rulers. The initial list skirted the issue by ordering that four suits of armor (two infantry, two cavalry) be purchased in Japan.²¹ Phillip III spared the sword and ordered twelve suits of armor sent out, declaring that defensive weapons did not present a problem.²²

The final piece of the puzzle, and the last to be finalized, was Philip's official reply to Tokugawa Ieyasu. By 1613, Spanish subjects in the Philippines had been in contact with the archipelago for roughly fifty years. Secular and religious authorities had treated with Japanese daimyo in the southern island of Kyushu and around the traditional capital at Kyoto. Both Tokugawa Ieyasu and his predecessor Toyotomi Hideyoshi traded letters with the governor-general of the Philippines, while Vivero's sojourn in Japan had opened diplomatic communication between the Tokugawa and the Viceroyalty of New Spain. Correspondence on both sides had gradually climbed the chain of political command, and had finally reached the summit of each. But it did so early into the shogunate's rule. The Tokugawa were but a decade into their two and a half century political dynasty, following a hundred years of political instability and three decades of bloody unification. Their control remained uncertain, their method of governance and mode of diplomacy still developing. This was all the more true from the perspective of the Spanish monarchy half a world away. Conversely, Habsburg Spain was an

¹⁹ The above list is not quite comprehensive. One hundred pieces of crystal glass and 150 "*baras de albernizes que no sean negros*" were also included. See, "List of Presents" (1613). *DNS* 12-12, CCVIII.

²⁰ Consulta del Consejo de Indias, 1613.05.10. *DNS* 12-12, CCVI.

²¹ "List of Presents." *DNS* 12-12, CCVIII.

²² Consulta, *DNS* 12-12, CCVI.

established entity but was conducting diplomacy in a part of the world where its reach was thin and its settlements exposed. Thus, Philip not only addressed a foreign ruler for the first time, he was establishing a relationship with an opaque political entity neighboring a vulnerable part of the empire.

The letter consisted of superficially straightforward content ripe with additional implications.²³ Philip wrote of receiving notice from his subjects of Ieyasu's prudent and just reign, and the kind treatment offered Vivero. The Duke of Lerma had also reported Ieyasu's offer of support and aid to Spanish vassals in all the ports and places they might arrive. Philip was pleased, declaring that "the friendship and communication of Your Serenity will be very agreeable to me."²⁴ The king noted the gifts he sent in recognition of those so generously offered by Ieyasu and his son Hidetada, "who has demonstrated this same intent and will with the esteem of his person."²⁵ Muñoz was to bear letter and gifts alike back to the shogun who had first dispatched him to Spain, and would provide further details of the king's intentions and good wishes. The king also entrusted the well-being of his subjects, and in particular the missionaries, into Ieyasu's capable hands. The heart of the letter resided in how the king proposed to give material expression to his good intentions: "In order to demonstrate the pleasure I will receive from the good correspondence, friendship, and commerce which my vassals will have with those of Your Serenity, I have ordered...that each year a ship from the kingdom of New Spain go [to Japan] laden with goods absent from there."²⁶

²³ This paragraph summarizes Philip III to Tokugawa Ieyasu (draft) 1613.06.20. *DNS* 12-12, CCX.

²⁴ Ibid. The Spanish reads "me será muy agradable la amistad y comunicación de Vuestra Serenidad."

²⁵ Ibid. "...a quien signifíco esta misma yntención y voluntad con estimación de su persona."

²⁶ Ibid.

On its face friendly, generous, and direct, the text also revealed where the king's priorities lie. Concern for the missionaries and their evangelical efforts ran through the text. Philip described the budding friendship between himself and Ieyasu as "aimed principally at the glory and honor of the true God."²⁷ He placed Catholic missionaries into the care of the Tokugawa leader, and designated Muñoz, a missionary, the continued bridge between the two polities. On a material level, the king established clear boundaries on the manner and make-up of trade, even as he authorized it. The ship that traveled between New Spain and Japan would be Spanish; no mention was made of any Japanese vessel crossing to Acapulco. In this, the monarch hedged against the concern over any Japanese learning how to sail the Pacific independently and thus ending the Spanish monopoly on the ocean. In addition, the letter only approved cargo that Japan "lacked." Here, Philip guarded against the export of any additional silver out of New Spain. The Japanese archipelago's silver reserves were well-known, but Philip evidenced the continued Spanish suspicion that Japanese merchants might develop a taste for exporting American bullion. In fact, king and council hoped the new proposed arrangement might encourage the opposite, with the ship from New Spain picking up silver in Japan for eventual sale to Chinese merchants in the Philippines.²⁸ In all this, the king adopted the positions recommended by the Council of the Indies the month before: allow trade under favorable circumstances, cite the importance of the missionaries and their work, delegate communication to Muñoz, and respond quickly.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Consulta del Consejo de Indias, 1613.5.10. *DNS* 12-12, CCVI.

The Council's final recommendation addressed style, not substance, and deliberated how to address the "king of Japan" and thereby insert him into Spain's diplomatic order.²⁹ To help, they sought the aid of precedent, specifically Philip II's letters to the "King of China" in the 1580s and Philip III's letter to the "King of Persia." Philip II had addressed the Chinese sovereign with the second-person pronoun "vos," then a form of polite address.³⁰ The Council surmised that "the referred style was used [because of] the King of China being such a powerful prince."³¹ However, the Council advised Philip to adopt "Your Serenity" (*vuestra serenidad*) for Japan, as had recently been done with the king of Persia. The title slotted Japan in as commensurate with the Safavid dynasty, another Asian polity the Spanish treated with at the time, but beneath Ming China. This may have been due to recognition of China's perceived power, or to the desire to avoid any form of address placing Spain in the inferior position. Likely it was both. However, "Your Serenity" remained polite, and the Council recommended that the respect it conferred be properly emphasized to the Tokugawa so as to avoid any slight in the latter's honor. Evidently, this question of address was the last piece of language decided, as Philip ordered the address to be inserted into the text of the rest of the letter. The king also ordered the missionaries entrusted with the letter to explain the significance of the title clearly. Thus the completed letter opened by addressing, "The Most Serene, Powerful, and Much Esteemed Minamoto no Ieyasu, Universal Lord of Japan," and addressed "Your Serenity" throughout.³²

²⁹ This paragraph summarizes Consulta del Consejo de Indias, 1613.06.14. *DNS* 12-12, CCIX. Once Date's embassy arrived in New Spain, it became much more common to refer to Ieyasu as the "Emperor" of Japan and Date as a "king" to distinguish between the two. At this time, however, the Council referred to Ieyasu as the "Rey del Japón."

³⁰ "Vos" has since dropped out of use in Spain, and is an informal second-person pronoun, similar to *tu*, where still in use in Latin America.

³¹ Consulta, 1613.06.14. *DNS* 12-12, CCIX.

³² Philip III to Tokugawa Ieyasu (revised draft), 1613.06.20. *DNS* 12-12, CCXVI. The date given in the texts adheres to the original June 1613 draft, but the revisions in response to the *Bautista*'s arrival in New Spain could not

Resolved to take quick action, Madrid attended to the letter, gifts, and requisite orders to officials by the end of June 1613. Philip's envoys appear to have caught the outbound fleet from Seville to New Spain in time, and departed that summer. Unfortunately, they departed without their intended leader, Alonso Muñoz. The Council authorized Muñoz to lead a delegation of three other friars, but ill health deterred him from attempting the long journey, much as Sotelo's own ill-health forced him to stand by and let Muñoz bring Ieyasu's letter to Philip in 1610.³³ Muñoz's absence deprived the party of a missionary with ties to the Tokugawa, but his continued presence in Spain gave the monarchy a recognized source of expertise on Japanese leadership. The Council would not forget this when Sotelo and Hasekura led the next round of diplomatic overtures. Muñoz remained active in the interim, continuing to memorialize the King on how best to pursue relations with Japan. Successful in lobbying for speedy action earlier in the year, Muñoz pivoted to redressing a potential breach in decorum in Philip's letter.

In November 1613, the friar's remonstrations convinced the Council of the Indies to consider an addendum to the letter and gifts sent out that summer.³⁴ At issue was the need to address a separate letter to Ieyasu's son, Tokugawa Hidetada. Muñoz had delivered a letter from each to Spain, both addressed to the Duke of Lerma.³⁵ Philip's original letter acknowledged the receipt of gifts from both and praised the good intentions of father and son alike. However,

have been ordered until 1614. Additionally, the *DNS* editors appear to have turned the letter into two separate documents. In the AGI manuscript copy, the ordered revision is noted in the margins rather than forming a separate document. This manuscript is available as AGI,MEXICO,1065,L.6,80v–81v, available online through <http://pares.mcu.es>

³³ Muñoz and the three friars' appointment to carry Philip's letter back to Japan is mentioned in Consulta del Consejo de Indias, 1613.06.14. *DNS* 12-12, CCIX. Muñoz's ill health is cited in a later *consulta* dated 1613.11.12. *DNS* 12-12, CCXIII, discussed in the next paragraph.

³⁴ Consulta del Consejo de Indias. 1613.11.12. *DNS* 12-12, CCXIII. I summarize the *consulta* throughout this paragraph.

³⁵ See Chapter 1.

Philip addressed his letter to Ieyasu, and only spoke of “Hidetada Minamoto, your son.” The Council reported Muñoz’s recommendation to pen a separate letter to Hidetada so as to avoid any slight arising from sending presents with no accompanying letter. The Council, via Muñoz, also raised the possibility of causing displeasure in the event that Hidetada succeeded his father as ruler by the time Philip’s embassy arrived. A letter drafted soon could reach New Spain via postal ships prior to the embassy departing New Spain for Japan.³⁶ The Council saw no harm in an additional letter and endorsed Muñoz’s proposal. In the name of expediency, it even drafted a letter to Hidetada in advance and requested the king’s signature. Philip complied later that month, and by late November, Hidetada had his letter.³⁷

This November addendum matters less for its consequence, and more for what it reveals about how Madrid understood its fledgling diplomatic partner. As Muñoz knew well, sending a letter to Tokugawa Ieyasu and “his son” misunderstood the practice and perception of power in Japan at that time. Tokugawa Hidetada, as acting shogun, was the face of government. His father, Ieyasu, remained at the summit of power, but ruled away from the Tokugawa capital at Edo. Ieyasu vacated the title of shogun in 1605, passing it to his son in order ensure that the office and its attendant authority remained the prerogative of the Tokugawa family. Though the Spanish referred to Hidetada internally as the “prince,” Philip had not just received letters from a ruler and his heir (though this was technically true), but from two men working together. Muñoz recognized the need to respond to the man in office and the man behind it.

³⁶ It must be remembered that ships left New Spain for Asia but once a year, in early spring. Though Philip’s embassy likely arrived in New Spain in late summer of 1613, it was not scheduled to leave New Spain until March 1614. Thus a letter drafted in Madrid in November 1613 had a good chance of getting to the embassy before its departure.

³⁷ Philip to Hidetada. 1613.11.23. *DNS* 12-12, CCXIV.

The challenge of titles did not end there. The Spanish vacillated between calling Ieyasu the “emperor” (*emperador*) and “king” (*rey*) of Japan, with Hidetada often simply “his [Ieyasu’s] son” (*su hijo*) or the “prince” (*principe*). None of these titles—save perhaps “son”—were ever claimed by either Tokugawa. The full appellation for title of shogun was *Sei-i taishōgun* (征夷大將軍, meaning “Barbarian-quelling Generalissimo”), a military title conferred by the figurehead imperial court in Kyoto. Japanese emperors held little effective power, though successive Tokugawa shoguns continued to rely on their symbolic authority and court titles.³⁸ Philip’s letter to Hidetada included one such title. Rather than address the letter to the “shogun,” Muñoz advised it be sent to “Dainagonsama” (大納言様, “Chief Councilor of State”), referring to Hidetada’s title as a member of the imperial court rather than his military title.³⁹ The suggestion revealed Muñoz’s more nuanced comprehension of Japan’s political and symbolic hierarchies, though even his added consideration failed to yield consistency. The final letters referred to the father as “Minamoto no Ieyasu” as part of a longer appellation, and the son simply as “Dainagonsama.” The former was a name, the latter a title.⁴⁰ Ultimately, Philip recognized Ieyasu alone as “The Universal Lord of Japan,” the king addressed both Tokugawa as “Your Serenity,” placing Hidetada on par with his retired father.⁴¹ More importantly, the Council’s back-and-forth demonstrated its ongoing attempts to establish a credible diplomatic vocabulary

³⁸ Though some form of imperial institution at varying levels of influence survived through the Meiji Restoration of 1868, the archipelago was ruled by successive military shogunates or endured periods of political disorder from the late twelfth century through the end of the Tokugawa period.

³⁹ In his letter to Spain, Hidetada referred to himself as *Sei-i taishōgun*.

⁴⁰ See PIII’s letters to Ieyasu and Hidetada. The superlatives in front of each were slightly different. Ieyasu was “Most Serene, Powerful, and Much Esteemed,” while Hidetada had to make due to with “Most Serene and Much Esteemed.”

⁴¹ Philip to Ieyasu, *DNS* 12-12, CCXVI; Philip to Hidetada, *DNS* 12-12, CCXIV.

with the Tokugawa, and the challenges contained therein. The arrival of another embassy, from yet another authority figure would complicate the picture still further.

Philip's supplementary letter to Hidetada also evidenced strategies for maintaining distance between the two apex rulers of each composite hierarchy. The king praised Hidetada for imitating his father's just rule, a compliment, but one that reinforced the elder Tokugawa's primacy.⁴² Additionally, Philip inserted Lerma between himself and the two Tokugawa hegemons. In both letters, the king mentioned that Lerma brought word of Tokugawa correspondence. Thus, though Philip wrote directly to both "Serenities," he also communicated that a subordinate had brought their words before the crown. The rhetorical move imposed symbolic distance, as correspondence remained one step removed from the royal person. Ieyasu played a similar game when they addressed their licenses to the Lerma rather than the king, thereby adopting the language of permission and the hierarchy it implied while minimizing the risk of offense.

Philip's supplementary letter gave Hidetada his titular due, but added nothing of substance to the original correspondence. The text also contained many of the same hints towards missionaries and the type of material exchange the Spanish monarchy envisaged. Philip "affectionately" remitted his messengers into Hidetada's hands, doing the same for all the other missionaries present in Japan "in the service of our true God."⁴³ The gifts Philip sent Hidetada were again goods from Spain that the king understood to be absent from Japan. The language paralleled Philip's description to Ieyasu regarding what types of goods he would permit in the trade between New Spain and Japan. However, Philip did not mention trade in this later letter to

⁴² Philip to Hidetada, *DNS* 12-12, CCXIV.

⁴³ *Ibid.* The rest of this paragraph draws on the letter.

Hidetada. His discussion of material goods began and ended with the note on the gifts. The remainder of the letter contented itself with pleasantries, hope for continued relations, and wishes for the good health of “Your Serenity.”

Thus, through the end of 1613 the Spanish crown remained committed to a direct trade relationship between New Spain and Japan. Philip and his advisers had taken their time, suspending deliberations a full year in response to concerns raised by the Manila *audiencia*. By the summer of 1613 the need for a timely reply precluded further waiting, and the Council took up the matter again in response to Muñoz’s calls for urgency. Once roused, Philip’s administration addressed it in the span of six weeks; it chose a delegation, decided on appropriate presents, drafted a formal letter to Tokugawa Ieyasu, and decided a framework for addressing him. Five months later Philip incorporated Hidetada into that same framework as an actor in his own right, again due to Muñoz’s petitioning. The proposed arrangement provided Spanish vessels with safe harbors, and extended protection to Spanish subjects across the Japanese archipelago. Philip’s wording also subtly established Spanish control of the terms and tenor of commerce. Ships would only carry goods Japan “lacked”—a check on the export of American silver, and said ships would invariably be Spanish. The successful expansion of trade might even come at the expense of the rebellious Dutch, recent interlopers in the trade with Asia. Finally, the king’s representative in New Spain reserved the right to terminate or alter the voyages at their discretion, as circumstance demanded. It had taken over three years, but the Tokugawa were to get their reply, and a path to pry open the Pacific.

But the Tokugawa had grown impatient, and Date Masamune had seen an opportunity. As Philip finalized his letter to “Dainagonsama” in November 1613 Date’s embassy looked out over the open ocean on their journey to Acapulco. The diplomatic party headed by Sotelo and

Hasekura came to ask for a less palatable version of what Philip had just granted. The king authorized Spanish ships to depart New Spain for Japan, but Hasekura walked the deck of a 500-ton Japanese ship. The king resolved that goods be brought to Japan, but Sotelo sailed in the company of Japanese merchants intent on selling their merchandise directly in New Spain. The king treated with the “Universal Lord of Japan” and “Dainagonsama,” but Sotelo and Hasekura carried letters from a third figure yet unknown in Spain. King and council approved trade in part due to the positive reports and kind treatment of Rodrigo de Vivero, but among the passengers on Date’s vessel was the aggrieved Sebastián Vizcaíno, whose letters denouncing the embassy would follow the party to Spain. Even as Sotelo and Hasekura sought to gain Philip’s favor, they personified the concerns of the king and his advisors. In the coming year, news of the embassy traveled together with doubts as to its purpose and warnings against the growing danger presented by Japan.

The 1614 Turn

1614 marked the Spanish throne’s pivot from cautious optimism to guarded pessimism in its relationship with Tokugawa Japan.⁴⁴ Ironically, this was also the year the monarchy encountered the most determined diplomatic effort yet to originate from the archipelago. When Hasekura and Sotelo arrived in Seville in fall 1614, they faced a steep uphill climb in their mission to (re)open Japan to New Spain, something Philip himself had ordered the year before. By the time Hasekura enjoyed a formal audience with the king in early 1615, the embassy’s hopes were dead in the water. This failure to establish commerce has relegated study of the embassy to the minutiae of its itinerary, remarks on its uniqueness, comments on Hasekura’s

⁴⁴ The Spanish throne is not the same as “Spain,” as the Philippines would continue to pursue the relationship in earnest for another decade, as will be discussed in Chapter 5.

character, and speculative work on Date's intentions.⁴⁵ But the Spanish government still had to decide what to do with the embassy itself, and how to address the disruption presented by a Japanese vessel calling repeatedly on the port of Acapulco. Whatever solution it arrived at also had to rebuff Japanese leadership without threatening the isolated and vulnerable Spanish presence in the Philippines, or endangering missionaries still active in the face of intensifying persecution in Japan. These concerns played out across the monarchy's territories the rest of the decade, but tracing them requires examining the pivot away from the resolutions of 1613.

In 1611, the letter from the Manila *audiencia* had stalled Philip's response to the Tokugawa for a year; in early 1614 a letter from the viceroy of New Spain delayed the reply an additional year and fundamentally changed its character. Philip's instructions to the viceroy Guadalcázar from summer 1613 gave the latter discretion over how to organize the trade with Japan, and Guadalcázar exercised this discretion before the inaugural voyage. The viceroy halted all diplomatic activity after confronting the arrival of another Japanese ship at Acapulco and receiving reports of increased hostility towards Catholicism in the archipelago. He kept Philip's diplomatic representatives—all missionaries themselves—in New Spain, along with the letters and presents they carried. The men and material had been scheduled to depart in a Spanish vessel bound for Japan early in the spring of 1614; the viceroy canceled this voyage as well and putting everything on hold until the monarchy could respond to the changing conditions.⁴⁶

⁴⁵ For example, Gonoï, *Hasekura Tsunenaga* (2003); Tanaka Hidemichi, *Hasekura Tsunenaga: bushi, Rōma o kōshinsu* [*Hasekura Tsunenaga: A Samurai Marches into Rome*] (Kyoto: Mineruva Shobō, 2007); Kōichi Ōizumi, *Date Masamune no misshi: Keichō ken'ō shisetsudan no kakusareta shimei* [*Date Masamune's Secret Messenger: The Hidden Orders of the Keichō Mission to Europe*] (Tokyo: Yōsensha, 2010).

⁴⁶ Guadalcázar first wrote to the king of these developments in a letter dated 1614.02.08. That letter does not appear to have survived, but others sources repeatedly cited and summarized its contents. See Consulta de Consejo de India, 1614.12.23, *DNS* 12-12, CCXV; Viceroy of New Spain to Philip III, 1614.05.22, *DNS* 12-12, V & VIII, etc.

Communication to and from New Spain illustrates the convoluted information networks undergirding the Spanish monarchy's administrative capacity, and the inherent challenge of weighing in on events in Japan from the Iberian peninsula. Valiant as the empire's attempts at global logistics may have been, the viceroy penned letters east to Madrid and west to Manila knowing the wait for responses could stretch half a year or beyond depending on the vagaries of transport and the king's prerogative. At best, Guadalcázar might read the reply to a letter he penned to the Philippines just prior to the Manila galleon's departure in March upon its return sometime in October or November. If a letter missed the boat, the viceroy waited another year. A letter eastward to Spain might receive a reply within five to six months, but here the viceroy awaited the king's pleasure.⁴⁷ For example, Philip did not reply to the viceroy's February 1614 report on the *Bautista*'s arrival until just before Christmas, meaning a year passed before Guadalcázar laid eyes on it.⁴⁸

This time-lag dampened the impact of the shogunate's growing hostility toward Christianity in 1614 during deliberations across the monarchy in 1614–1615. Writing to Spain in February 1614, the viceroy was current on events in the Philippines through late summer 1613. The Philippines in turn lagged behind events in Japan by a few weeks to a couple of months.⁴⁹ The Council of the Indies did not discuss the issues Guadalcázar raised until October 1614. The cumulative imposition of logistics and geography meant that when the Indies reached a decision

⁴⁷ Graciela Márquez states that the crossing between Seville and Veracruz took two to three months. See the relevant pages in her chapter "Commercial Monopolies and External Trade," in *The Cambridge Economic History of Latin America vol. I*, eds. Victor Bulmer-Thomas, John Coatsworth, Roberto Cortes-Conde (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 401–405.

⁴⁸ Philip III to the viceroy of New Spain, 1614.12.23. *DNS* 12-12, CCXVII.

⁴⁹ Skipping ahead in the narrative, news of the *Bautista*'s arrival in Manila in August 1618 reached Date in roughly two months.

that December it was responding to information from Japan dating to over eighteen months prior. Though Guadalcázar cited martyrdoms, expulsions, and the Japanese “doing other things very much against our religion,” he did not know of edict proclaimed by the Tokugawa finally expelling all missionaries from the archipelago, also in February 1614. A “manifesto” against missionaries, scholars consider the issuance of this prohibition the pivotal turn against the Catholic Church in Japan.⁵⁰ Guadalcázar duly passed on word of this edict and its deleterious effects when he first learned of it in 1615. His February 1614 letter (no longer extant) may have alluded to earlier measures prohibiting worship and churches in Tokugawa lands, as well as the fallout from a recent corruption scandal involving a Christian daimyo and shogunate official.⁵¹ The expulsion edict is, appropriately, given a great deal of weight when discussing the “end” of orthodox Catholicism in Japan, but Spain’s decision to back away from commerce was made prior to the news reaching European shores.

Upon hearing of the *Bautista*’s arrival, the viceroy did more than send word east to Spain; he also clamped down on diplomatic traffic westward. First and foremost, this entailed holding Philip’s envoys in New Spain. The party, now led by Fray Diego de Santa Catalina in Alonso Muñoz’s absence, adopted a holding pattern until Philip’s new orders could arrive. By canceling the voyage the viceroy also (knowingly) imposed a full year’s delay on the mission. A February letter to Spain drafted weeks before Santa Catalina’s group was to originally depart had no hope of receiving a response in time to allow the party to sail with the Manila galleons that year. If

⁵⁰ For a recent article on the prohibition as a “manifest,” see Timon Screech, “The English and the Control of Christianity in the Early Edo Period,” *Japan Review*, no. 24 (January 1, 2012): 3–40.

⁵¹ The Okamoto Daihachi Incident involved bribery and a rumored assassination plot on the Nagasaki magistrate. Both the daimyo (Arima Harunobu) and the shogunate official (Okamoto Daihachi) implicated were Christian. When the plot was revealed in 1612, the Tokugawa executed Okamoto and sentenced Arima to death. For an overview see, Jurgis Elisonas and James L. McClain, “Christianity and the Daimyo,” in *The Cambridge History of Japan*, ed. John Whitney Hall (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 365–68.

they left at all, they would do so in 1615, five years after Ieyasu and Hidetada first sent their greetings to the king.

More than Tokugawa intolerance, the arrival of Date Masamune's vessel and envoys prompted Guadalcázar to write his letter and delay Philip's reply. The *San Juan Bautista* dropped anchor in Acapulco on January 28th, 1614, roughly 430 kilometers from the viceroy's residence in Mexico. News of the ship and its diplomatic pretensions prompted the viceroy to write to Philip ten days later. The letter would have combined news from the regular Manila galleon of last fall and early reports on the *Bautista* and its passengers. The viceroy now had two legations on his hands at a very sensitive time. Moreover, he had a foreign ship in Acapulco, the second Japanese vessel in four years to arrive at an ostensibly closed port. This latest development amplified the trepidation brought on by news out of the Philippines the previous fall. Sotelo and Hasekura's sudden arrival and Vizcaíno's disgruntled return gave Guadalcázar pause. As a result of timing and circumstance, Date's embassy, ship, and ambassadors were all initially introduced to Philip as part of a problem. News of the mission reached Spain arm-in-arm with reports of hostility toward Christianity and concerns over Japanese sailing the Pacific and calling on Spanish ports. Sent to propose deeper relations, Date's embassy actually fed doubts about the wisdom of trading with Japan on the terms proposed by its leaders. The group swam against this current throughout its sojourn abroad.

The viceroy's correspondence with Madrid on the matter of Philip's return embassy continued for a year after Guadalcázar's initial letter, becoming more cautious with each new entry. The viceroy updated the monarchy in May 1615, reporting disruptions caused by some of the Japanese who had come to Acapulco and forwarding a copy of a decree confiscating the arms

of all but a select few in order to “avoid other disgraces.”⁵² As for relations with Japan as a whole, Guadalcázar cautioned that “as the people [of Japan] come to be known, the consideration and prudence necessary in [addressing] the connection they desire with this [kingdom] becomes more apparent each day.” Guadalcázar cautiously sent Sotelo and Hasekura on their way to Spain even as he held Philip’s return embassy in New Spain and prohibited the *San Juan Bautista* from returning to Japan until he received word from his king. He also forwarded memorials from the embassy along with others opposed to it. One common thread in those letters were negative appraisals of Date’s chosen spokesman Sotelo, who tried to sell the embassy in an atmosphere of growing distrust and muddled narratives.

An “Imperial” Envoy Makes His Case

Sotelo never managed to close the sale. From the beginning, Date’s embassy had a credibility problem. His ship carried letters and reports, but not all embraced the embassy’s point of view. One such letter alleged that the Tokugawa did not condone Date’s actions, if they even knew of them. The embittered Vizcaíno was no longer an ally, if he had ever been, and so the Spanish arriving onboard the vessel did not present a united front. Sotelo tried to override these obstacles by grafting the embassy directly to the Tokugawa, claiming that he had been sent by the shogunate to accompany Date’s Japanese ambassador. The friar fatefully chose to combat mistrusts with a strategy built on half-truths. However, in parallel to the *Bautista*, Sotelo’s attempts to establish credible simply raised further doubts.

Hasekura Tsunenaga is often thought of as the embassy’s leader, and visually arresting documents such as a portrait and his certificate of Roman citizenship keep him in the mind’s eye.

⁵² Viceroy of New Spain to Philip III. 1614.5.22. *DNS* 12-12, VIII. The remaining quotes in the paragraph are from this same source.

But Sotelo wrote, translated, or otherwise organized the vast majority of the embassy's documents. He was the group's primary voice and principal filter. Both the friar's memorials on behalf of the embassy and Spain's response make clear the importance of integrating the Keichō Embassy into earlier Tokugawa efforts rather than treating it as a curious enterprise motivated by Date's singular vision. Additionally, the basis for Sotelo's arguments, Date's agenda in sending him, and the cautious reception of Spanish officials to both challenge a frame setting Catholic expansion against Japanese insularity when considering how relations between the Tokugawa shogunate and Habsburg Spain frayed.

Despite traveling on Date's ship with Date's retainer carrying Date's correspondence, Luis Sotelo chose to present himself as an "imperial" (i.e. Tokugawa) representative in early memorial and announcements. Writing to Philip while off the coast of Spain in the fall of 1614, Sotelo reported that "the emperor and his son ordered me to come [to Spain]." To the influential Duke of Lerma, the king's favorite at court, he noted "the emperor [is] sending me for the response to his letter and for another which comes anew from the King of Voxu [Ōshū]."⁵³

Sotelo used this supposedly "imperial" association to fashion himself into an important axis of the Japan-Spain relationship. The longer documents, especially, laid out Sotelo's experience in Japan and influence in high circles, and emphasized the friar's self-reported dexterity in Japanese. In a letter to his native Seville, Sotelo recorded that "his divine Majesty [God] was served by communicating to me that language in a short time."⁵⁴ A sympathetic pamphlet published in Seville that year was less modest, declaring that Sotelo had "in a few

⁵³ Luis Sotelo to Philip III, 1614.10.01, and Sotelo to the Duke of Lerma, 1614.09.26. *DNS* 12-12, III & XLII respectively.

⁵⁴ Sotelo to the City of Seville, 1614.09.30. *DNS* 12-12, XII.

months developed such a capacity with the language that he could begin to communicate, as he has done, in a manner that controlled wills, as with the Emperor and his son [Ieyasu and Hidetada], so with the rest of the kings and grand lords of that empire.”⁵⁵

As the pamphlet baldly stated, Sotelo connected linguistic ability to influence in the emperor’s court.⁵⁶ He recorded his participation in early discussions to expand trade with New Spain, most prominently during Rodrigo de Vivero’s time in Japan in 1609–1610. Sotelo also sought to assuage concerns over the intensifying persecution of Christians in Japan by claiming to have calmed the emperor in the wake of a recent crackdown.⁵⁷ A lengthy memorial to the viceroy written collectively by the embassy reported that Sotelo checked the emperor’s anger by reminding him of the open negotiations with the Spanish king. The Tokugawa hegemon then held back, “all because of the hope he had for the positive response of Your Majesty.”⁵⁸ This resourceful move simultaneously drew attention to Sotelo’s ability to serve Spain’s interests in Japan while emphasizing the imperative of a “positive response” lest that service come to naught.

Sotelo also asserted that he had been Ieyasu’s original choice to deliver letters to Spain four years prior. The friar repeatedly recounted how the “emperor” charged him to accompany the shipwrecked Vivero back to New Spain in 1610 and deliver letters to Philip. Unfortunately, illness waylaid Sotelo just as Vivero embarked—on a Tokugawa ship, necessitating the

⁵⁵ “Relación breve y sumaria del edito, que mandó publicar en todo su reyno del Boju...” (1614). *DNS* 12-12, XIII.

⁵⁶ Here I draw examples from his letter to Philip (cited above), the most robust in this regard, but similar narratives of varying length are present in other letters.

⁵⁷ Sotelo referenced the Okamoto Daihachi incident and the persecution that followed.

⁵⁸ Memorial presented by the Embassy to the Viceroy of New Spain (1614). *DNS* 12-12, VII.

appointment of another in his place.⁵⁹ Three years passed without a reply, while the Dutch and English pressed their competing agenda on the “emperor.” Vexed by the late response but still committed to friendship with Spain, the emperor had dispatched a recovered Sotelo to retrieve a formal answer.⁶⁰ Beyond furthering the Tokugawa shogunate’s diplomatic project, Sotelo was completing an errand that had been his from the beginning. Moreover, the contrast between the Spanish monarchy’s tardiness and Dutch and English encroachment served again to encourage a swift, positive reply.

Sotelo’s claim to principally be a Tokugawa representative was not true, nor was it ultimately accepted.⁶¹ However, the friar’s clear record of previous experience, acknowledged even by those who vilified him, made it difficult to dismiss the man and the embassy outright. Date’s letters to authorities in New Spain clearly stated that Sotelo served as his envoy. Even without direct knowledge of the original Japanese —dependent as they were on Sotelo and his companions for translation—Spanish officials treated the embassy as one party, not two, with Sotelo acting as the principal liaison for Date’s ambassador rather than as a separate, recognized representative of the shogunate. This left the friar to serve in the role Date intended, though bereft of any “imperial” prestige and damaged by his attempt to argue for it.

Date Masamune dispatched letters to secular and religious authorities in New Spain both times he sent out the *San Juan Bautista*, in the fall of 1613 and again three years later. In his

⁵⁹ This was the Franciscan friar Alonso Muñoz, who delivered the shogunate’s letters to Philip and was in Spain when Sotelo and Hasekura arrived late in 1614.

⁶⁰ *DNS* 12-12, VII.

⁶¹ None of the above is an outright lie, though Sotelo certainly exaggerated or filtered the information to his benefit. He also glossed over problematic aspects of his time in Japan, such as his incarceration in Edo for preaching Christianity just a few months before the embassy set sail in 1613. The memorial does mention this imprisonment, making sure to note that it was the “prince” rather than the “emperor” who jailed him. His letter to Philip also notes vaguely that “a variety of things happened at that time.”

1613 letter to the Viceroy of New Spain Date explained the makeup of the diplomatic contingent as follows: “I entrusted Fray Luis Sotelo to serve as an envoy-priest (使僧, *shisō*). Similarly, I send three retainers (侍, *samurai*) to accompany [the friar]. Of these, I have instructed two to return to court (帰朝, *kichō*, referring to Japan) from your noble country (New Spain). I now send one as far as the inner country (奥国, *okuguni*, i.e. Spain) to accompany your letters, and I humbly entrust him into your care along the road.”⁶² Date started the list with Sotelo, the only one to be named or given the title of envoy. The daimyo sent the three retainers to accompany Sotelo rather than the other way around. Hasekura was the single retainer sent to the “inner country,” though Date never gave his name in any communication with the Spanish. Whatever the internal debates about leadership of the legation and chain of command, the daimyo’s formal, outward correspondence positioned Sotelo as the most prominent member of the embassy.

Although the three retainers disappeared from the letter following their initial introduction, Date mentioned Sotelo repeatedly before and after. The daimyo requested that missionaries (along with some cargo) be sent to his domain, “until *bateren* Sotelo returns to this country (Japan),” defining the diplomatic mission in terms of Sotelo’s actions and presence.⁶³ Upon outlining his requests for the passage of ships, missionaries, and goods, Date closed the letter by noting that the details had been communicated verbally to Sotelo. Finally, the daimyo framed the entire endeavor as stemming from his encounter with the Christian faith and his

⁶² Date Masamune to the viceroy of New Spain, 1613.10.17. *SDS*, doc. 70. The full text reads: “此布羅以類子曾天呂を使僧二相頼、同侍三人相添差越候、此内二人を從尊国致帰朝候様に申付候、今一人ハ奥国迄指遣候間、貴札被相添、路次中諸事万端奉頼候。”The use of *shisō* is notable, connecting Sotelo to the Buddhist monks who often served Japanese lords as diplomatic envoys.

⁶³ *Ibid.*

meeting Sotelo. Throughout this 1613 correspondence, the daimyo portrayed the friar as a catalyst for the embassy and its foremost member.

To jump ahead briefly, Sotelo remained prominent in Date's second wave of letters, penned in fall 1616.⁶⁴ The daimyo described his embassy in familiar language: "An envoy accompanied the *bateren* Sotelo, to present (進上) himself to the 'Sovereign of the Inner Southern Barbarians.'" ⁶⁵ "Envoy" (使者) referred to Hasekura, described previously only as a "retainer" (侍). However, he still "accompanied" Sotelo, and Date credited Sotelo with requesting that the *Bautista* be sent to Acapulco once more to ferry the group back to Japan. Furthermore, in the 1616 letter Date referred to another Japanese retainer by his name, designating Yokozawa Shōgen (横沢将監) his "captain" (かびたん). Date further stated that he had communicated details of the current voyage to Yokozawa, much as he had to Sotelo three years earlier. Hasekura, however, remained nameless.⁶⁶ These later letters demonstrate Date's willingness to note the names of specific Japanese retainers when their role merited the attention. Hasekura served as a symbolic and spiritual proxy, not a spokesman, a role requiring less explicit explication in the daimyo's correspondence.

Though fully aware of the content of Date's letters, Sotelo consciously chose to change tactics and associate himself with the Tokugawa instead. Beyond high self-regard, the answer appears to have been that most important currency of diplomacy: legitimacy. The embassy faced a hard sell, attempting to convince officials in both New Spain and Spain to expand trade in a

⁶⁴ This batch of letters was shorter and more direct, and again I focus on the letter to the viceroy. See Date Masamune to the viceroy of New Spain, 1616.09.05. *SDS*, doc. 303.

⁶⁵ The Japanese reads: 奥南蛮之帝王様へ、伴天連曹天呂二使者相添進上申候。Ibid.

⁶⁶ Internal Date records do mention Hasekura by name.

manner that might threaten their control over commerce across the Pacific, and to do so with a previously-unknown regional power from a country known for its volatility. Sotelo sought to demonstrate both that the Tokugawa would condone any agreement Spain brokered with Date, and that Date's standing and faith warranted Spain's trust and resources. Paradoxically, this led Sotelo to the belief that his best chance of aiding Date's endeavor would be to establish some distance from it. Hasekura's presence aided this effort, allowing Sotelo to juxtapose himself with the man increasingly identified as Date's primary ambassador.

The embassy's 1614 memorial to the viceroy, forwarded to Madrid, provided the fullest account of Sotelo's line of thought. The document characterized the Tokugawa "emperor" as pragmatic and desirous of expanded commerce. In this arena, the primary threat to Spain lay in the possibility that the Dutch and English might present the emperor with a more practical alternative. Without Spanish trade, the emperor had no reason to condone Catholicism. In contrast, Date's secular power merged with his openness to and interest in the Catholic faith. The embassy claimed that Date wrote in friendship to the King of Spain and the Holy Father, and "sent his ambassador to kiss the feet [of the pope] on his behalf." The daimyo's requests for pilots, mariners, and cargo supported the larger purpose of propagating the faith in his domain. Furthermore, Date was a powerful ally, and "in the opinion of all it is understood that he will be emperor, because there arms determine this succession."⁶⁷ Here then, the danger lay in foregoing the opportunity to win the friendship of a powerful lord willing to provide safe haven to Spanish merchants and missionaries alike.⁶⁸

⁶⁷ Date's potential to become "emperor" was a consistent theme in Sotelo's writing, though he did allow for Date simply remaining a powerful "king." Hidetada's succession to power after Ieyasu's death forced Sotelo to change tactics. Lines such as this also fuel speculation that the true purpose of the embassy was to establish a military alliance between Date and Spain and overthrow the Tokugawa. See for example, the writings of Ōizumi Kōichi.

⁶⁸ Both quotes from this paragraph are from the embassy's memorial, *DNS* 12-12, VII.

The memorial presented the embassy as the most common-sense means to give everybody what they wanted. For the emperor of Japan, Date's embassy was "killing two birds with one stone" (literally, "*con una piedra se matan dos pájaros*"), for it provided a convenient means by which the emperor could finally secure trade with New Spain and receive his overdue reply from Philip.⁶⁹ Sotelo, of course, was the one charged with acquiring it. As for Date, the embassy allowed him to pay his proper respects to the secular and religious heads of the church, and secure the material means by which to further missionary work throughout his kingdom. As proof of his devotion, he sent not just letters, but a spiritual proxy in the person of Hasekura. Finally, the embassy also handed Spain one stone and two very enticing birds. Pleasing the Tokugawa would come at the expense of the Dutch and English and advance Spain's security and commercial interests in the area. Partnering with Date specifically would ensure the progress of the Catholic mission in Japan. This joint embassy, as portrayed in the memorial, was the key to obtaining both objectives.

Sotelo's rhetorical strategy transformed Hasekura into a singular symbol of his master's devotion and the potential of the Japanese mission writ-large, a tactic the embassy would adopt throughout its time in Europe. Sotelo noted to Philip that "The Ambassador is a dignified person of high status in his land, as Your Majesty will come to see."⁷⁰ The friar did not draw attention to any of Date's other "retainers," making sure to focus attention (beyond himself) on Hasekura. A 1615 pamphlet summarizing Hasekura's audience with Philip emphasized the retainer's piety and recorded his wish—translated by Sotelo—to be baptized by Philip's own hand. The same tract mentioned that the Japanese ambassador purposely held off on the ceremony until reaching

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ Sotelo to Philip, *DNS* 12-12, III.

Spain.⁷¹ Hasekura's faith reflected his master's resolve, and demonstrated the potential of a Japanese church guided literally and figuratively by Sotelo. Where Date had thought it best to emphasize his connection to Sotelo, the friar judged it necessary to promote Hasekura's piety in order to vouch for the intentions of the embassy's patron. This image of Hasekura as devout, both to his lord and his Lord, exists into the present day. Initially, the mission paired Hasekura's piety with Sotelo's supposed credentials. As the latter deteriorated, the party increasingly relied on the former.

Spanish authorities never accepted Sotelo as a Tokugawa representative. The Council of the Indies consistently referred to a single ambassador guided by the friar. They wrote of "the ambassador of the King of Voxu," clearly in reference to Date, not the Tokugawa.⁷² The friar remained a crucial figure, but authorities described a man escorting an embassy from a king, rather than a man sent as the envoy of an emperor.

It is possible, even likely, that Sotelo enjoyed some measure of Tokugawa approval. After all, the shogunate had permitted Date to free Sotelo from an Edo prison, and did so fully cognizant of Date's mission. The embassy's memorial mentioned a separate document written by the Tokugawa "General of Ships" to an official in New Spain as corroboration for Sotelo's claim of being a Tokugawa envoy.⁷³ That letter remains hidden, if it is still extant, and whatever Sotelo may have possessed did not convince his hosts in New Spain and elsewhere. Sotelo, ever conscious of the need for a sense of grandeur and legitimacy, implied a lukewarm reception in

⁷¹ See "Relación que propuso el embajador del Japón al rey de España y la respuesta del rey," (1615). *DNS* 12-12, LIX. The editors of the *DNS* volumen suggest the text was compiled from a letter Sotelo authored.

⁷² See for example Consulta del Consejo de Indias, 1614.11.11. *DNS* 12-12, L.

⁷³ Embassy memorial to the viceroy, *DNS* 12-12, VII. The Spanish reads "*general de las funeas*," the final word meant to represent *fune* (船). The person in question was Mukai Shōgen (向井将監), the Tokugawa Admiral of the Fleet and Date's primary collaborator in the shogunate.

New Spain, and requested that Seville prove a more gracious host.⁷⁴ Sotelo's exuberance may have originated in the perceived need to lend the embassy as much splendor as possible, a motive consistent with his repeated invocations of the "emperor's" trust and approval.

Ultimately the *Bautista* delivered a clearer message than the friar, even if the message received was not the one sent. The vessel's arrival and the muddled information accompanying it to Acapulco convinced the Spanish monarchy to close a door that Date's representatives were never permitted to reopen. Spain's subsequent treatment of the party displayed a mix of caution, accommodation, and exasperation. Sotelo's failed gambit left the mission with the question of how to find leverage without at least the illusion of Tokugawa blessing. Hasekura's faith and its proper display continued to define the embassy's efforts to fulfill its mandate.

Reaching a Decision

Date's embassy fell victim to its own poor publicity as it made its way across the Spanish empire. After spending two months in Mexico, the group departed New Spain in June 1614 aboard a Spanish vessel before arriving off the coast of Andalucía in late September.⁷⁵ Each stop between Japan and Spain generated documents and impressions that made their way to Madrid alongside the group: letters from other missionaries in Japan, reports from an embittered Vizcaino, details from a wary viceroy, and the first impressions of officials in the port of Sanlúcar and Seville. The voices, discussed below, countered the vision and arguments offered by Sotelo, and helped undermine the embassy in advance of its arrival to the king's court.

⁷⁴ Luis Sotelo to the City of Seville, 1614.09.30. *DNS* 12-12, XII.

⁷⁵ Gonoï, *Hasekura Tsunenaga*, 84–86. The party did not travel directly from New Spain to Spain, encountering inclement weather on the journey and stopping for roughly two weeks in Havana.

Philip III held an audience with Hasekura in early 1615, but in truth the embassy made its pitch to the monarchy in the six months leading up to this meeting. This timeline worked to the monarchy's advantage. Philip and his council used reports and memorials issued in the wake of the embassy's arrival to decide the matter of trade with the Tokugawa. However, by doing so before the group's arrival, the monarchy could render its verdict without ceding diplomatic space to the unknown "king of Ōshū." Throughout 1614 Philip's response embassy remained in New Spain awaiting word on whether and how to proceed to Japan. In December 1614, the Council decided to proceed with the king's embassy but removed all reference to trade. Date's representatives played a pivotal role in this decision without ever participating directly in it. By outsourcing diplomacy with Spain to Date, the Tokugawa had (indirectly) succeeded in sending a sturdy vessel to Acapulco and a Japanese party to Madrid, but the very act of strategic detachment raised suspicions among the Spanish. The daimyo's embassy would make their case directly to king and council, but by the time it did, the only serious question remaining for the monarchy was what sort of welcome to grant the envoys of the upstart king of Ōshū, and what degree of hospitality would befit his station and add luster to the Spanish crown.

The king's advisors weighed the discordant opinions confronting them for two months. The Council of the Indies wrote a lengthy memorial to Philip in October 1614, summarizing correspondence from the viceroy, Sebastián Vizcaíno, and the friar Sebastián de San Pedro, as well as Sotelo's letter to the king.⁷⁶ This *consulta* stressed the need to prevent the Japanese from learning to sail the Pacific, and set the tone for subsequent policy. The Council of the Indies considered additional letters the next month, most notably translations of those brought by

⁷⁶ Consulta del Consejo de Indias, 1614.10.30. DNS 12-12, XLVI. San Pedro was a Franciscan missionary who helped translate the Tokugawa letters Vizcaíno received in 1612. San Pedro remained in Japan.

Sebastián Vizcaíno from Japan.⁷⁷ The Council of State submitted an ambivalent statement on how best to deal with Date's embassy, preaching caution overall but divided on how much was necessary.⁷⁸ Two days before Christmas, Indies advised that any mention of trade be removed from Philip's letter to Ieyasu.⁷⁹ Though the monarchy met Date's representatives early the next year, the ambiguities surrounding the mission were sufficient to convince Philip's advisors that direct trade with Japan would do more harm than good. Not only was Date's proposal off the table, but his embassy had inadvertently and irreversibly tabled Ieyasu's proposition as well.

Critics developed their warnings against the embassy along interrelated lines: the perceived strategic disadvantages of open Pacific waterways, intensifying Christian persecution in Japan, and suspicions over the legation's motivations. Strategic concerns featured prominently in Guadalcázar's oft-quoted letter from February 1614, summarized at length in the Indies' *consulta* that October.⁸⁰ The viceroy warned that Spain should proceed with extreme caution in pursuing the "correspondence" ("*correspondencia*") proposed by the Japanese. A well-armed and warlike people in his estimation, encouraging their transit to New Spain could endanger settlements and ships along the Pacific coastline. The threat of Japanese maritime aggression resonated with officials constantly striving to rebut the corsairs and pirates plaguing Spain's imperial traffic in the Atlantic and Caribbean.⁸¹ Guadalcázar reported that one hundred and fifty

⁷⁷ Consulta del Consejo de Indias, 1614.11.11. *DNS* 12-12, L.

⁷⁸ Consulta del Consejo de Estado, 1614.11.22. *DNS* 12-12, LI.

⁷⁹ Consulta del Consejo de Indias, 1614.12.23. *DNS* 12-12, CCXV.

⁸⁰ Consulta, *DNS* 12-12, XLVI. The rest of the paragraph draws on this source to summarize the viceroy's positions.

⁸¹ Fears about potential Japanese aggression were not unfounded. Tokugawa Ieyasu denounced piracy (as well as unsanctioned trade) and encouraged foreign leaders to deal with Japanese pirates as local law demanded. However, sporadic Japanese involvement in violence abroad persisted throughout the early decades of the seventeenth century, fueling fears in Macao and Manila, among other locales. Additionally, during Ieyasu's rule the Japanese were but a few years removed from the large-scale invasions of Korea under his predecessor Toyotomi Hideyoshi. For early

Japanese arrived on Date's ship, too many to his liking.⁸² Though they asked for missionaries, Guadalcázar suspected (correctly) the Japanese also desired knowledge of navigation and how to build ships, and (falsely) reported that a Portuguese "*maestro*" helped construct Date's current vessel.⁸³ The viceroy also questioned trade on its own merits, claiming the Japanese had brought little of import but might well export silver out of New Spain. Here Guadalcázar presented an early formulation of Spain's subsequent policy: deter the Japanese without rousing them. In a follow-up letter from May 1614 the viceroy recommended that Spain restrict contact with Japan through the Philippines and refuse the embassy its inconvenient requests.⁸⁴

Various authors, Guadalcázar included, drew on the deteriorating condition of the Church in Japan as they warned the throne against endorsing direct trade with either the Tokugawa or Date. The Council of the Indies summed up these opinions in its October 1614 *consulta*.⁸⁵ The viceroy contrasted Date's request for more missionaries with reports that the "emperor" had executed Christians, and that "his son the prince" had expelled missionaries from his monarchy, a clear reference to the 1612 edict Sotelo had violated. As previously mentioned, Fray Sebastián de San Pedro wrote from Japan that Sotelo induced Date to send an embassy without Tokugawa

Tokugawa efforts to restrain the Japanese populace, see Mariko Takeda, *Sakoku to Kokkyō No Seiritsu*, Dōseisha Edo Jidaishi Sōsho (Tokyo: Dōseisha, 2005).

⁸² The viceroy's estimate roughly aligns with Date sources, which record roughly 180 people aboard, 40 of whom were "Southern Barbarians" (i.e. European). See Volume 2 of *Date Chike Kiroku: Sendai-Han Shiryō Taisei*, (Sendai-shi: Hōbundō, 1972), 596 (entry for Keichō 18.09.15).

⁸³ Potential Portuguese aid suggests the ongoing tension between Spanish and Portuguese interests and subject in the Pacific during the time of the two crowns' unification (1580–1640). Rivalry rather than cooperation often defined the relationship, especially as it related to entrance to Asian markets. Here, though Guadalcázar erred. Will Adams, an Englishman, had built earlier Tokugawa ships, and Date's liaison with the shogunate, Mukai Shōgen, had worked with Adams, but the main source of foreign expertise for Date's vessel came from Spaniards.

⁸⁴ Viceroy to Philip, *DNS 12-12*, VIII. See also AGI, MEXICO, 28, N.18.

⁸⁵ *Consulta del Consejo de Indias*, 1614.10.30. *DNS 12-12*, XLVI. Subsequent summarizations from this paragraph derive from this *consulta*, itself a summary of other petitions.

sanction. San Pedro claimed that treating with Date's embassy would incite the "emperor" against Christians in Japan, implying the danger of a legation organized by a rogue friar.⁸⁶ Sebastián Vizcaíno rejected any claim that Japan wanted Christians as an outright lie, and reported the emperor forcing thousands to recant, closing churches, and expelling missionaries from the "*reino del Quanto*" ("kingdom of the Kantō"), in reference to the shogunate's holdings and the city of Edo in the Kantō Plain.⁸⁷

These secular and spiritual concerns fueled suspicion of Date's and his representatives' motives, common to all the letters trickling into Madrid aside from those presented by the embassy itself. Date requested missionaries, but he also desired an intolerable degree of control—in the eyes of Spanish officials—over the means, material and personnel involved in any "correspondence." Philip's original letter offered trade via Spanish ships, but Date sent his own galleon across the sea. The daimyo bettered the Tokugawa's tacit toleration of Christianity in earlier letters by requesting missionaries, but his requests also assumed a prominent role for Japanese vessels in transporting them to and from the archipelago. In effect, Date offered a potential safe haven for Catholic missionaries and Spaniards at the cost of opening Acapulco and facilitating a transfer of maritime technology. The monarchy was amenable to the invitation, ambivalent about the opening, and emphatically opposed to any transfer. Additionally, letters from outside the daimyo's legation cast aspersions on any offer to harbor, let alone encourage, Christianity in Japan. San Pedro saw Date's mission as the product of Sotelo's machinations, and argued that the church required the friendship of the emperor more than it needed the favor of

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ Ibid. See as well Vizcaíno's letter to Philip, 1614.05.20, *DNS* 12-12 XLIX.

any one lord. He concluded that the latter would come at the cost of the former.⁸⁸ Without explicit Tokugawa sanction, Date's legation offered too little and asked too much. Sotelo's inability to furnish proof of Tokugawa approval, despite his best efforts to do so, undercut the mission every step of the way.

Perhaps more than any other single factor, the divisions among Spaniards active in and involved with Japan prevented Date's mission from gaining the credibility needed to secure the daimyo's terms or negotiate a similar deal in good faith. The monarchy had to sort through a mess of bitterly conflicting accounts operating on multiple levels of authority, resulting in a guarded response. In November 1614 Vizcaíno wrote Salinas, the former viceroy and current president of the Council of the Indies, to report on his time in Japan. Vizcaíno appended his letter to two from the Tokugawa together with their Spanish translations.⁸⁹ Taken together, the three documents demonstrate the fractured relations among Spain's own representatives, as well as the difficulty of establishing which layer of Japanese political authority the crown dealt with.

Vizcaíno did not pull punches. He alleged Sotelo "goes to Castile and Rome with chimeras of letters," and detailed his mistreatment at the hands of the Japanese aboard the ship and in Acapulco.⁹⁰ The erstwhile representative reported the Japanese had confiscated the Tokugawa presents entrusted to Vizcaíno, ostensibly to use for Date's mission instead. Guadalcázar intervened and ordered the gifts remitted to Salinas as originally intended. Contemporary sources from Mexico at the time corroborate that Vizcaíno was mistreated, and

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ Vizcaíno to the President of the Council of the Indies, 1614.05.20. *DNS* 12-12, XLV. Here I focus on the Spanish, as this is what Salinas and the Council would have read. The Japanese versions are discussed in Chapter 1.

⁹⁰ Ibid. "...pues va á Castilla y Roma con quimeras de embaxadas." Unless otherwise noted, the details here derive from Vizcaíno's letter.

possibly injured, as a result of his standoff with the Japanese.⁹¹ The scuffle also caused the viceroy to confiscate most Japanese arms and order that some remain in Acapulco while the rest proceeded to Mexico.⁹² In Vizcaíno's estimation, the request for missionaries was just a pretense to send a ship full of cargo each year. He closed the letter by again acknowledging the conflict with Sotelo, and warned Salinas to expect nothing but cross words from the friar regarding Vizcaíno's own character.

The Spanish network in Japan was small, and when it turned on itself, sorting out the truth became difficult. The history, if not the bad blood, between Sotelo and Vizcaíno extended beyond the latter's missive to the letters he acquired from Tokugawa Ieyasu and Hidetada. Sotelo helped translate both, along with Sebastián de San Pedro and the scribe Gregorio Lopez. The original letters dated from July 1612; the translations were completed and approved a month later. Two years later Vizcaíno and San Pedro had turned on Sotelo so vehemently that Vizcaíno declared Sotelo in control of a fake embassy and San Pedro recommended that Sotelo and Hasekura not be permitted to leave New Spain. Conversely, the translations demonstrated Sotelo's continued role in Spanish affairs in Japan, and may have lent credibility to the friar's repeated claims to that effect.

Unfortunately, the Tokugawa letters Vizcaíno forwarded to Salinas did little to clarify matters.⁹³ They addressed the viceroy of New Spain, not Philip, and did not mention, condemn,

⁹¹ Domingo Francisco de San Antón Muñón Chimalpahin Cuauhtlehuanitzin, *Annals of His Time: Don Domingo de San Antón Muñón Chimalpahin Quauhtlehuanitzin* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2006), 275. "The said señor Sebastián Vizcaino is also still coming slowly [to Mexico], coming hurt; the Japanese injured him when they beat and stabbed him at Acapulco, as became known here in Mexico."

⁹² See *DNS* 12-12, V for a transcription of the viceroy's order that most Japanese surrender their arms while in Acapulco.

⁹³ Transcription of the Japanese originals and the Spanish translations for both letters can be found in *DNS* 12-9, pp. 959–81. Note that this is a different volume than the one (12-12) most often cited.

or condone Date's enterprise, predating it by over a year. They expressed continued interest in trade and assumed its enactment, but gave few specifics. As discussed in the preceding chapter, Ieyasu clearly stated that Japan was a land of *kami* and Buddhas, not a foreign god, though he did not condemn Christianity outright.⁹⁴ However, the letters were two years old by the time Salinas or anyone else in Spain read them, and did not shed any light on how to interpret Date's embassy, despite arriving with the daimyo's letters on the *Bautista*. Sotelo needed clear Tokugawa sanction, but did not have it. Furthermore, though Date's motives could be mapped onto the Tokugawa's stated goals, Vizcaíno, San Pedro, and Guadalcázar consistently called these motives into question.

The reactions of officials in Spain who met with Date's recently-arrived embassy in fall 1614 provided one final pathway for information to reach the Council of the Indies. Here again the results were mixed. The monarchy began receiving reports early in October, when the Duke of Medina Sidonia announced Sotelo and Hasekura's arrival to the Council of State.⁹⁵ He submitted a matter-of-fact report from Sanlúcar de Barrameda, situated at the mouth of the Guadalquivir River connecting the inland port of Seville to the Atlantic. He noted that the mission arrived with thirty servants, and spoke of passing on to Madrid and Rome. Medina Sidonia provided the group with accommodations but thought it unnecessary and expensive to send the entire party on to Seville. He also promised to solicit documentation of the party's business with the monarchy.⁹⁶ A more flattering report followed from Seville five days later, when a city official announced the embassy's impending entrance into the city. Juan Gallardo de

⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁹⁵ Medina Sidonia to Secretary Juan de Ciriza, 1614.10.09. *DNS* 12-12, X.

⁹⁶ Ibid. It appears Medina Sidonia was unsuccessful in detaining any members of the party, who all continued to Seville. Don Francisco de Varte later put the number of the mission's detail at twenty.

Cespedes wrote of an embassy “much greater than can be imagined,” and was one of the few officials to speak of two distinct ambassadors, one “from the emperor of Japan and the other from the king of Voxu [Ōshū].”⁹⁷ But the mission had not reached Seville, and Cespedes based his enthusiasm on letters to the City of Seville forwarded by Sotelo. A letter from Date numbered among them, a testament to Sotelo’s strategy to ingratiate the embassy to his home town. The stratagem worked well early on, as Cespedes was sufficiently impressed to arrange lodging for the mission’s key figures in the Alcazar, the royal palace in Seville.⁹⁸

Don Francisco de Varte authored a more balanced account for the Council of the Indies the following month. He served as the head of the Casa de Contratación (“House of Trade”) in Seville, the agency tasked with overseeing commerce with the Indies. His report leveled criticism at Vizcaíno and Sotelo alike, rather than taking the side of one over the other. He characterized Sotelo as having left Japan after many years either “from a just zealousness and lack of caution or from some ill-founded ambition.”⁹⁹ Varte in turn noted Vizcaíno’s complacency in bringing Japanese back to New Spain and helping them construct their own ship in the process. The letter’s critique resonated with its intended recipient. Varte addressed Salinas, the very man who had charged Vizcaíno to return the Japanese then in New Spain without bringing any back. Varte went so far as to say that Vizcaíno had contravened Salinas’ orders. Critical of both Spaniards, Varte appraised Hasekura more favorably. He spoke with the Japanese ambassador on two occasions, with Sotelo translating, and regarded Hasekura as a

⁹⁷ Cespedes to Philip III, 1614.10.14. *DNS* 12-12, XV. See also AGS,EST,256,2,47.

⁹⁸ Ibid. “Alcazar” most often referred to a castle or palace built in Iberia under the Moors. The Alcazar in Seville has been designated a World Heritage Site.

⁹⁹ Varte to Salinas, 1614.11.4. *DNS* 12-12, XLVIII.

“man of esteem, relaxed, sharp and well spoken, modest.”¹⁰⁰ Varte also wrote of his intention to help the ambassador in any way he could, visiting Hasekura and presenting him with gifts outside of any orders to accommodate the representative.¹⁰¹

Varte’s letter also distilled the Spanish monarchy’s core concern: the veracity of the embassy. The author attempted to sort out the issue, cognizant of “the inconveniences that could occur by admitting it (the mission) with parsimony or generosity without verifying the substance of it and the true sponsor, and if it [comes] with the knowledge of the Emperor of Japan.”¹⁰² Varte set himself upon a tougher task than he supposed. The official juxtaposed other letters arguing against the mission’s credibility with the documents Sotelo and Hasekura carried. Conversations with the two men made clear to Varte that the mission represented the “King of Ocio [Ōshū],” not the “Emperor of Japan,” but he provided no concrete answer regarding the Tokugawa’s acknowledgment of Date’s initiative. Varte concluded by acknowledging the he-said, he-said nature of the argument: “The controversies among friars, their zeal and concealed ambitions, in particular those which have marked the Indies, Your Lordship [The Duke of Salinas, President of the Council of the Indies] is more familiar with...I will not dare to characterize anything of those [missionaries] that have come nor those that remain in Japan.” Varte’s assessment exemplified the struggles of officials in Spain to parse the various accounts they received from half a world away, and their concern about the mission and its true sponsor. As the embassy approached Madrid, king and Council needed to decide the interrelated issues of

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

¹⁰¹ Ibid. Varte also criticized Vizcaíno for failing in his charge to find the islands Rica de Oro and Rica de Plata.

¹⁰² Ibid. This paragraph continues to quote and paraphrase Varte’s letter.

trade with Japan and the proper treatment of Date's mission, even if the embassy would not be permitted to position itself as a direct continuation of Tokugawa outreach.

Varte remained silent on the merits of Date's proposals, but weighed in on the question of how to receive the daimyo's mission and tied it to the glory of Spain. He did not acknowledge Sotelo as a separate representative of the "emperor," but doubting the friar did not equate to dismissing the party out of hand. He advised Salinas to give the mission an honorable welcome and thereby build Philip's reputation abroad. Varte also asserted that whatever issues Vizcaíno raised regarding relations with Japan, the Tokugawa had received the Spaniard with "a grand demonstration" at their court.¹⁰³ In Varte's eyes, Spain needed to do the same. The author advised against confusing issues of state with the mission's formal reception, and portrayed the party as a cost-effective way to raise the profile of Spain at a time when it competed with the Dutch and English in East Asia. Varte thought the monarchy could host the party honorably, quickly, and cheaply, and thus advocated a proper welcome to serve the glory of the crown.

The Council of the Indies and the Council of State sifted through this growing pile of reports, memorials, and impressions. A diplomatic mission from a foreign country in the Indies allowed room for both to weigh in on the matter.¹⁰⁴ State adopted the quick and efficient reception advocated by Varte while Indies favored the commercial protectionism recommended by the viceroy Guadalcázar.

State memorialized the throne in November, recommending that the king grant the mission an audience, arrange accommodations in Madrid, and provide the party a daily

¹⁰³ Ibid.

¹⁰⁴ This led to a measure of bureaucratic in-fighting over who had access to certain information when. See Secretary Antonio de Arostegui to the Duke of Lerma, 1614.11.16. *DNS* 12-12, XLVII.

allowance of two hundred *reales*.¹⁰⁵ The Council acknowledged the “variety” of things said about the mission, but determined that giving Sotelo and Hasekura their say would help the monarchy better ascertain the truth. However, the Council anticipated the mission’s request for aid along the road to Rome, and advised against providing any help. The memorial suggested the request was beneath the king’s dignity, though costs were also probably a concern. For its part, State also rejected the idea of maintaining “correspondence” (*correspondencia*, meaning contact, commercial or otherwise) with Date, citing recent Tokugawa hostility toward Christianity. Finally, and somewhat unusually, the memorial closed with the dissenting opinion of the Duke of the Infantado, one of the more prominent members of the nobility and Council of State at this time.¹⁰⁶ The Duke evinced much more suspicion of the mission. He opined that Philip risked the wrath of the Japanese “emperor” against Christians by treating with a mission sent—in the Duke’s estimation—without his approval. The councilor suggested refusing the party’s entry into Madrid and notifying the emperor that Spain had rejected Date’s mission because it did not bear the emperor’s letters. The Duke dissented vehemently enough that the Council could not present a united front, and left Philip to chart what he deemed to be the proper course.

The matter came to a head in the Council of the Indies two days before Christmas of 1614, when the Council formally advised Philip to revise his original letter to Tokugawa Ieyasu, removing any mention of trade between Japan and New Spain.¹⁰⁷ The memorial acknowledged the importance of the viceroy Guadalcázar’s input in its decision, and concerns over persecution.

¹⁰⁵ Consulta del Consejo de Estado, 1614.11.22. *DNS 12-12*, LI. This paragraph summarizes the *consulta*’s content.

¹⁰⁶ The Duke was one of the wealthiest members of the nobility and at this time began challenging Lerma’s authority at court. See Williams, *The Great Favourite*, 195–97, 216–17.

¹⁰⁷ Consulta, 1614.12.23. *DNS 12-12*, CCXV. For the original manuscript of this important *consulta*, see AGI,FILIPINAS,1,N.152.

“Because matters of the faith in that kingdom [Japan] are in a different state, it must be appropriate to omit and remove from [the letter] a clause... [stipulating that] a ship carrying merchandise go [to Japan] each year from New Spain.”¹⁰⁸ The Council further summarized the viceroy’s reports of killings and expulsion of Christians, and Tokugawa leadership “doing other things very contrary to our religion.”¹⁰⁹ The simple cause-and-effect suggested between persecution and denying trade dominates accounts of the mission’s failure and the collapse of relations between Japan and Spain. However, the memorial did not stop there.

The council decided that Philip’s embassy to the Tokugawa and the attendant presents could continue on to Japan, raising the question of how to get them there. Indies suggested that Philip’s gifts and envoys return on Date’s ship, still quarantined in Acapulco.¹¹⁰ This resolution presented new dilemmas connected to the secular priority of checking Japanese ambitions in the Pacific. Spanish sailors were to help Date’s ship return to Japan and deliver Philip’s envoys and presents, but the council forbid envoy and sailor alike from returning on any Japanese vessel on pain of death. Furthermore, the council ordered the viceroy to send the bare minimum of sailors required, under express command not to allow the Japanese to become capable of independent navigation. In this way, the council sought to avoid ever again having to deal with a Japanese vessel in a domestic port in the Americas. Even under the terms of Philip’s original letter to Ieyasu the crown provided that the ship be Spanish. The monarchy had no room for Japanese vessels in their vision of the Pacific, and the *Bautista*’s arrival clearly contributed to the retreat from any commercial relationship between New Spain and Japan.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

¹¹⁰ Ibid. This paragraph continues summary of the December 1614 *consulta*.

The Council decisions in late 1614 demonstrated the extent to which Date's mission and Sotelo's stratagems backfired. The daimyo and the friar intended the mission to simultaneously serve Japan's commercial ambitions and the Spanish monarchy's support for missionaries, but the endeavor threw into sharp relief the divergent priorities of the two polities. The daimyo's embassy impacted the monarchy's decision-making, but never in the manner his representatives hoped. The Councils of State and the Indies treated the question of trade as one to be decided between the Tokugawa and Philip, and the king settled the matter by altering his reply to Ieyasu. Date's overtures simply complicated the issue and drove home the need to protect the empire's maritime capacity. The monarchy did not formally consider Date's terms, nor did it consider using the daimyo as a bridge to the Tokugawa. As his missives to the monarchy show, Sotelo correctly surmised the need to burnish Date's mission with Tokugawa legitimacy, but his failure to accomplish this limited the group's potential to achieve an agreement of any substance in a climate of caution and growing mistrust. When the council considered Date's ship and mission, they considered how best to dispense of both, albeit elegantly and cordially. Sotelo and Hasekura remained in Europe two years, but the party spent that time attempting to negotiate from an increasingly desperate position. Actions spoke louder than words, and the *San Juan Bautista's* unwelcome arrival in Acapulco spoke with more force than Sotelo could ever muster. The ship's appearance made the monarchy less, not more, open to the idea of trade. Date's mission thus played a decisive role in determining commercial relations between Philip's Spain and Ieyasu's Japan, but it was not the role the daimyo intended, and the mission's diplomatic impact crested before its members met with the king in Madrid.

The symbolic import of the embassy in Spain peaked in January and February of 1615, even as the king's orders to abandon trade between Japan and New Spain traversed the Atlantic.

Philip granted a formal audience to Hasekura Tsunenaga in January 1615. The ceremony discouraged concrete proposals or potentially fraught negotiations, and Hasekura demurred from either. However, with Sotelo translating, Hasekura professed his Christian faith and requested that the king himself serve as godfather during his anticipated baptism.¹¹¹ Date's ambassador was baptized in Madrid the next month; the Duke of Lerma served as godfather with Philip in attendance.¹¹² But even before the baptism ceremony, the Council of the Indies expressed its desire to put the whole affair behind the monarchy. A *consulta* from February 1615 fretted over the mounting costs of hosting the mission, and expressed frustration that Hasekura had not yet discussed the substance of his mission even after meeting the king.¹¹³ The Council knew what Hasekura intended to ask, having read numerous memorials detailing or denying the mission's agenda for months. Yet the tone of the memorial showed just how soon the monarchy lost patience with the mission, and suggests how soon the party may have resorted to tactical delays. Sotelo and Hasekura made clear their intentions to pay their respects to the pontiff in Rome and their hope that Philip fund the excursion. Attending the pope kept the party in Europe, bolstered Hasekura's (and therefore Date's) spiritual credentials, and might pay secular dividends as well if the group could convince the pontiff to put in a good word with the Catholic king of Spain. Soon after Hasekura's February baptism king and council would debate the merits of sponsoring the mission's journey to Italy, and much of that debate centered on the appropriate amount of resources to devote to the "King of Ōshū" and his representatives.

¹¹¹ A record of this audience, including Hasekura's translated declarations and Philip's response, was published in Seville, probably in 1615. See "Relación que propuso el embajador del Japón al rey de España y la respuesta del rey," *DNS* 12-12, LIX. The editors of the *DNS* volume suggest the text was compiled from a letter Sotelo authored.

¹¹² Gonoï, 112–117. See as well Chapter 20 and 21 of Scipione Amati's contemporary record of the embassy, *Historia del regno de Voxu del Giapone*, reproduced as *DNS* 12-12, LVII & LXII.

¹¹³ Consulta del Consejo de Indias, 1615.2.4. *DNS* 12-12, LXI.

Philip III followed the recommendations made by the Councils of State and Indies in the closing months of 1614 without alteration. The crown housed the mission in the Convent of San Francisco in Madrid, and provided a per diem of 200 *reales*. This conformed exactly to the majority opinion of State's *consulta* from late November, as did the decision to grant Hasekura an audience. Similarly, the king adopted the course of action outlined by the Council of the Indies on the matter of any trade between New Spain and Japan. Indies presented its *consulta* on December 23rd. Philip's affixed his seal to the revised instructions for the viceroy the same day, announced the revisions to his original letter, provided instructions on how to deliver it, and detailed orders for those Spaniards sailing on Date's vessel.¹¹⁴ In all cases, the instructions mirrored those recommended by the Indies: omit any discussion of trade from the letter, dispatch Date's ship but forbid any Spaniard from returning on a Japanese vessel, and prevent the Japanese from learning to navigate on their own.

The monarchy decided these broad strokes at the close of 1614, but addressed an additional loose end early in the new year: Fray Alonso Muñoz's role in Philip's embassy. Muñoz had been Indies choice to lead Spain's response embassy to the Tokugawa in 1613. Illness kept Muñoz in Spain in 1613 and Philip's party left without him. Eighteen months later Muñoz had recovered enough to request permission to rejoin the party, still detained in New Spain following the arrival of Date's ship. As a result, three months after Philip ordered the viceroy to dispatch his legation on the *Bautista* as quickly as possible, the monarch wrote again in March 1615 to announce Muñoz's recovery and impending return to New Spain, ordering that the friar be given charge of the legation.¹¹⁵

¹¹⁴ Philip III to the viceroy of New Spain, 1614.12.23. *DNS* 12-12, CCXVII.

¹¹⁵ Philip III to the viceroy of New Spain, 1615.03.08. *DNS* 12-12, CCXIX.

Ieyasu's choice once and Philip's choice twice over, Muñoz offers a counterpoint to his colleague and fellow missionary-cum-diplomat Luis Sotelo. Muñoz retained the monarchy's trust after delivering Ieyasu and Hidetada's letters, and achieved the sort of standing with the monarchy Sotelo wrangled for but never achieved. Muñoz memorialized the throne repeatedly from 1611–1614, and presciently but fruitlessly stressed the importance of an expedient reply to the Tokugawa. Sotelo emphasized the same point in his own memorials to the crown in 1614 and cited Ieyasu's displeasure with the lack of a timely response.¹¹⁶ As discussed above, Muñoz also successfully lobbied the Council of the Indies to draft a separate letter to Hidetada.

The Council continued to call on Muñoz after the *Bautista* complicated Philip's response to the Tokugawa. It summoned Muñoz to Madrid from Salamanca to advise the monarchy as it dealt with conflicting reports in fall 1614, and proposed Muñoz and Sotelo be brought together to confer on the matter.¹¹⁷ However, the Council made clear that this should happen only after Muñoz was questioned, an attempt to check Sotelo's version of the facts against Muñoz's grasp of the situation. These actions also suggest lingering doubt about just how far the monarchy could trust missionaries who had been active half a world away. Still, Muñoz's bearing and opinions left a positive impression on the councils. Indies remarked on Muñoz's character when summoning him to Madrid, stating that the friar was a "person of whom there is much satisfaction and [one who is] of intelligence," praise it never extended to Sotelo.¹¹⁸

Muñoz's sway in Madrid, or at least his standing there, contrasted markedly with Sotelo's struggles establishing and pursuing his diplomatic mission in Spain. The two men—both

¹¹⁶ Sotelo to Philip III, 1614.10.01. *DNS* 12-12, III.

¹¹⁷ Consulta del Consejo de Indias, 1614.11.11. *DNS* 12-12, L

¹¹⁸ Consulta del Consejo de Indias, 1614.10.30. *DNS* 12-12, XLVI.

Franciscans, both veterans of the Japan mission, both knowledgeable regarding Japanese domestic leadership—occupied similar positions, but there is little evidence that they worked toward common interests once Sotelo and Hasekura arrived in Spain. They had been acquainted soon after Muñoz’s 1606 arrival in Japan as lead Franciscan missionary, at a time when Sotelo was proselytizing in the region south of Kyoto.¹¹⁹ There are no records of their interaction upon Sotelo’s return to Spain in 1614, or what they may have said to one another when conferring at the behest of the Council of the Indies. They may no longer have been on amicable terms, as a contemporary Jesuit report suggested the displeasure of his fellow Spaniards, not illness, led to Sotelo’s replacement by Muñoz in 1610.¹²⁰ Muñoz helped shepherd Philip’s initial positive response to the Tokugawa, while Sotelo unintentionally brought about the recension of the same agreement. Muñoz’s unambiguous Tokugawa credentials clearly bolstered his reputation, while Sotelo’s muddled credibility weakened the latter’s standing. Still, the monarchy knew that Sotelo had not completely fabricated his connection to the shogunate. Philip’s original reply to Ieyasu acknowledged both men, introducing Muñoz as a “discalced [friar] of the Order of the Seraphic Father San Francisco, who came with the letters of Your Serenity (Ieyasu), in place of Luis Sotelo and returns with this [letter to you].”¹²¹ Ieyasu and Hidetada’s Japanese letters mentioned Sotelo, and this fact had been translated for the Spanish king. Whatever the monarchy might think of Sotelo and the mission he accompanied in 1614, it could not claim that the man was a complete unknown. Sotelo stressed this prior connection, but proof of the “emperor” of Japan’s

¹¹⁹ Kiichi Matsuda, *Keichō Ken’ō Shisetsu: Tokugawa Ieyasu to Nanbanjin* (Tokyo: Chōbunsha, 1992), 71–76.

¹²⁰ Josef Franz Schütte, “Don Rodrigo de Vivero de Velazco y Sebastián Vizcaino en Japón (1609–1610, 1611–1613),” in *La expansión hispanoamericana en Asia: siglos XVI Y XVII*, ed. Ernesto de la Torre Villar (México: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1980), 110–112. The pages cited here form part of the transcription of a letter sent by the Jesuit Pedro Morejon from Japan in early 1613.

¹²¹ Philip to Ieyasu (draft), *DNS 12-12, CCX*.

blessing in 1610 did not serve as sufficient evidence of his continued goodwill four years later.

The monarchy recognized Muñoz as the messenger of the Japanese “emperor,” but bound Sotelo inextricably and exclusively to Date, the “king of Ōshū.”

Personality may have also contributed to Muñoz’s acceptance and Sotelo’s plight, as the latter failed to ingratiate himself to many of the Spanish officials who might have provided support and assistance. Vizcaíno plainly disliked the man, and Guadalcázar remarked that Sotelo was of “low station,” and “set in motion more things in this [mission] than were necessary.”¹²² As seen above, Varte also commented that he was unsure if Sotelo acted out of righteous zeal or naked ambition, in contrast to his praise of Hasekura’s bearing and demeanor.¹²³ Varte’s characterization informs the opinion of Japanese historians into the present, who often portray Hasekura as stoic and dutiful in contrast to Sotelo’s ample ambition. The friar entertained grand plans for the mission and held high expectations for what it might achieve, but his efforts left officials unconvinced, and his tactics endeared him to few. Though more respected, Muñoz’s actions proved equally infertile. His attempts to rejoin Philip’s embassy played out in keeping with the general tenor of the monarchy’s haphazard, halting attempts to send Ieyasu a reply. In short, he missed the boat. Philip announced Muñoz’s departure for New Spain to the viceroy in a letter from early March. Guadalcázar’s replied in May that Date’s vessel departed Acapulco in April with Philip’s letters and presents onboard.¹²⁴ Fray Diego de Santa Catalina led the party in Muñoz’s absence.

¹²² Viceroy of New Spain to Philip III, 1615.05.25. *DNS* 12-12, CCXX.

¹²³ Varte to Salinas, *DNS* 12-12, XLVIII.

¹²⁴ Philip III to Viceroy of New Spain, 1615.03.08. *DNS* 12-12, CCXIX. For the Viceroy’s reply see CCXX above.

The viceroy authored an earlier report to the king that January, with the *San Juan Baptista* still quarantined and Guadalcázar still awaiting Philip's revised orders. This letter took into account the latest reports from the Philippines from the previous fall. The viceroy passed on word from the Governor-General of the Philippines that the Tokugawa had ordered all missionaries out of Japan, and were gathering them in a port to expel from the archipelago. The news deepened Guadalcázar's conviction that Spain proceed cautiously with regards to Japan, and that he was justified in holding the Japanese in New Spain. Philip's letter affirming that conviction and disavowing further trade between New Spain and Japan was already *en route*.

Increasing intolerance of Christianity did contribute to Guadalcázar's decision to hold Philip's embassy in New Spain until Madrid reevaluated the situation. However, the viceroy also detained the king's embassy expressly because of the *Bautista's* unexpected appearance in Acapulco. On the surface Date offered favorable terms, but he also upended the diplomatic process Madrid had cautiously pursued the last three years. New Spain and Japan were to be linked, if at all, by Spanish vessels, yet here was a Japanese vessel arriving unannounced. Sent as a catalyst to encourage relations, the embassy registered at best as a nuisance and at worst a threat, and there was little Sotelo could do to talk his way out of that perception. Christian persecution dampened Spanish willingness to engage with Date, but conversely, Date's mission and the manner of its arrival was itself a fatal blow to the fraught diplomacy conducted between the monarchy of Spain and the Tokugawa shogunate. When news of the 1614 edict reached Madrid some eighteen months later, it confirmed a decision already made rather than closing a door that had been open.

Conclusion

In the summer of 1613 Tokugawa Ieyasu obtained much of what he wanted with regards to New Spain; he just didn't know it. Philip III and his councils sent the senior Tokugawa kind words, large portraits, fine glass, fresh soap, and the promise of a Spanish ship calling annually on the ports of Japan direct from New Spain. Five months later they even sent the shogun Hidetada a letter of his own. Philip's envoys anticipated crossing the Pacific in spring 1614, arriving in eastern Japan that summer. All the shogunate need do was wait. But four years was a long time to wait, and developments in Japan outpaced the Spanish monarchy's ability to debate, formulate, and dispatch a reply.

Where the Tokugawa grew restless from waiting, Philip's administration grew cautious from not knowing. The shogunate gave Date's mission its blessing, but demurred from proclaiming its sanction in writing. When a foreign ship dropped anchor in Acapulco, Spanish officials became keen to know who they were dealing with, and it was precisely this point that proved the hardest to pin down. Sotelo attempted to establish Tokugawa sanction and thus the mission's credibility, but the Spanish monarchy only trusted the friar and Hasekura as far as it could control them. Unfortunately, the *Bautista* unbidden arrival pointed out the limits of Spain's control to viceroy and king alike, as well as auguring the potential dissolution of that control if Japanese traffic continued. Thus the council debated the party's itinerary in Europe, but did little to engage the party's requests to expand the flow of missionaries, mariners, and merchandise half a world away, and actively shied away from these ideas in its final orders to Guadalalcázar.

From 1615 the two remaining diplomatic veins—Philip's response envoy and Date's embassy—stalled out on two separate continents, unwanted envoys occupying uncertain diplomatic space.

Had Muñoz sailed with the rest of Philip's party to Japan the group might have fared better, but a trusted messenger could not overcome an empty message. Philip sent warm words to the "Universal Lord of Japan," but offered little else. The legation would be present during an eventful period, marked by a final domestic battle to solidify Tokugawa rule and Ieyasu's death the following year. The transition from Ieyasu to his son Hidetada accelerated the development of the shogunate's diplomatic ideology and posture, while Philip's envoy raised the question of Spain's place within—or without—an emerging order of relations.

Date's tireless duo remained in Europe another two years. Unwilling to license talk of trade, the king did permit the party to travel on to Rome, where Hasekura could make his submissions before the pope in the place of his patron. Bereft of political standing, Sotelo and his companion turned to the symbolism of piety, performing rituals of submission in order to display their sincerity and thereby salvage their mission. However, symbolic actions only won them symbolic victories, and soon enough their exasperated Spanish hosts debated how best and how soon to be rid of them.

3. Submitting to Orders

Hasekura Tsunenaga formally entered Rome on 29 October, 1615. He passed through the Porta Angelica, abutting the nearly complete St. Peter's Basilica on the west bank of the Tiber River.¹ The gate was a common point of entry for pilgrims from afar. The Japanese ambassador progressed into the heart of the city along a path familiar to tourists today. Hasekura and his party, however, were escorted into the city by a company of men on horseback and the pope's cousin, Cardinal Scipione Borghese. The legation struck east from St. Peter's to the five-pointed fortress of Castel Sant'Angelo, and crossed the Tiber on the bridge of the same name. It passed through the neighborhoods of Ponte and Parione, making its way to the Capitoline Hill. Rome's curious inhabitants lined the streets to catch a glimpse of the group and the "Japanese Ambassador" at its head as it progressed through the heart of the Eternal City.² Hasekura arrived at the Franciscan monastery of Aracoeli, looking out over the Roman Forum just behind the present-day Piazza Venezia.³ He, Sotelo, and the rest of the group lodged in the monastery and would reside in the city into January 1616 as honored guests, often in the company of city nobility. A trip to a country house included "the cousin of the pope and all the gentlemen of Rome, the cardinals, their relatives, and the ambassadors that were in [the city]."⁴ Date's representatives became temporary residents of the papal court.

¹ Construction of the Basilica continued from the early sixteenth century well into the seventeenth. The façade in front of Michelangelo's dome had just been completed in 1612, and commemorates Pope Paul V. The basilica was not completed until the 1620s, and work continued on the colonnade and St. Peter's Square for another fifty years.

² *DNS* 12-12, C.

³ The monastery no longer stands.

⁴ "Relación verdadera del recibimiento que la santidad del Papa Paulo Quinto y lose más cardenales hizieron en Roma al embaxador de los Japones..." 1616. *DNS* 12-12, CVI.

But first Hasekura had to complete his pilgrimage to the heart of Catholic power. Following its entrance through the pilgrim's gate and progress through the city, the party dismounted at the foot of the Quirinal Palace northeast of the Roman Forum, atop the highest of Rome's seven hills.⁵ They proceeded to an audience chamber where a gathering of bishops and diplomatic luminaries filled the gallery of the pope's court. Hasekura approached the papal throne, went down on one knee, and presented the letter of his lord Date Masamune to the Holy Father. The Japanese retainer declared his great joy at being able to represent his lord's submission and goodwill, the pope warmly welcomed Date's "ambassador," and the ever-present Luis Sotelo translated the remarks of each to the other. Pope and public celebrated Hasekura's arrival as a testament to the power of the Christian faith to bring together lords and kingdoms from opposite ends of the earth. A pamphlet recording Hasekura's "solemn entry into Rome" was published soon after in Italian.⁶

At the opposite end of the earth, Fray Diego Santa Catalina endured his own solemn and somber entry into the heart of Tokugawa authority. His party was not accompanied so much as guarded. The friar and his two companions brought letters and presents from Philip III, the "Universal Catholic Monarch" to both the shogun Hidetada and his father Ieyasu, "the Universal Lord of Japan." Ieyasu granted the party an audience at his residence in Sunpu, 180 kilometers southwest of the shogunate's seat in Edo. The retired shogun remained silent at the group's appearance, accepting its gifts and letters without comment, question, or outward sign of

⁵ Following the palace's construction in the sixteenth century, the site served variously as a papal summer retreat, residence, and the administrative center of the Papal States. From 1870 the palace functioned as a royal residence, and from 1946 to the present has been an official residence for Presidents of the Italian Republic. Mayu Fujikawa's recent article provides more information on the palace, the papacy's diplomatic aspirations, and a fresco depicting various foreign embassies, Hasekura among them. See Fujikawa, "Pope Paul V's Global Design: The Fresco Cycle in the Quirinal Palace," *Renaissance Studies* 30:2 (2014), 192–217.

⁶ "Relatione della solenne entrata...", DNS 12-12, C. The pamphlet was later translated into French as well.

interest.⁷ Hidetada proved even colder, delaying any audience and ordering the party confined to Uraga. Following Ieyasu's death in 1616, Hidetada denied them a formal meeting. He also denied the group leave to depart for the Philippines on a Spanish ship out of Nagasaki. Instead, the shogun returned all of Philip's gifts and forced the missionaries to return directly to New Spain aboard the *San Juan Bautista*. Their compulsory passage on Date's galleon directly violated Philip III's standing orders neither to return directly to New Spain nor return on a Japanese vessel. Humiliated, dispirited, and now afraid of reprisal in New Spain, Santa Catalina and his fellow friars prepared for their departure with little to show for their misadventures.

As previous chapters have suggested, there never was a time when Tokugawa and Habsburg leadership saw eye-to-eye long enough to build a tenable relationship. Divergent conceptions of governance, differing priorities over resources and their management, and evolving conceptions of diplomacy undermined any initial good faith, sustained lobbying, and individual self-interest attempting to bridge the Pacific Ocean. There was too much geographical, political, and conceptual distance, even as a brief flurry of ships, gifts, and men traveled between the two. This chapter addresses the conceptual distance by studying the intersection of order, submission and expectation in the experiences of Hasekura and Santa Catalina's respective missions. Following a handful of increasingly unproductive encounters with Spanish representatives intended and accidental, Tokugawa leadership pivoted away from imperial Spain even as the most ambitious diplomatic outreach in the archipelago's history navigated the courts of Catholic Europe. Simultaneously, Philip's court struggled to articulate a coherent policy

⁷ The following summary derives from letters submitted by Diego de Santa Catalina and an anonymous friar, discussed later. Letter from Fray Diego de Santa Catalina to the viceroy of New Spain, 1617.02.24. *DNS* 12-12, CCXXXIII; "Relación de lo que sucedio a tres religiosos descalzos...escrita por uno de los mismos religiosos," (1616?). *DNS* 12-12, CCXXI. The "Relación" is a lengthy document, and is the principal source for information on the reception of Santa Catalina's reception in Japan.

toward an East Asian polity that had suddenly expanded the diplomatic theater to include the Americas and Spain itself. Philip could draw symbolic legitimacy from Hasekura in Europe and obstruct commercial forays to New Spain, but his rhetoric could not dictate terms in East Asia. There Tokugawa prerogative set the tone and determined the scope and scale of encounter, as the shogunate's leadership managed relationships in accordance with emerging priorities. These diplomatic frameworks, the rituals of submission within them, and the legations sent between, form the basis for the yawning gap between Japan and Spain in their frustrated attempts to find common ground.

Suggesting incompatibility between Japan and the countries of Western Europe is provocative only to the extent that it appears a stumble backward rather than a step forward. The question of tension between Japan and Europe, East and West, motivates a number of studies in early modern world history and Japanese history. Press the issue too far and the study lapses into a description of assumed characteristics; press too lightly, and the contrasts between societies loses much of its instructive potential. Cultural and religious tensions animate studies of Japan's foreign relations, studies that take an undifferentiated West or a proxy country as its opposite. Here I emphasize the cultures of diplomacy active in Tokugawa Japan and Habsburg Spain, as well as the logistical realities structuring each. I also relieve Spain of any burden to stand in for the West or even Catholic Europe. Interrogating a monolithic East-West binary requires disaggregating both sides of the pair. Eurocentric histories of Japan emphasizing the archipelago as a culture set apart mobilize the severing of Japanese-Iberian relations as the foundation for the society's lamentable rupture with the West (as well as framing its post-Restoration pivot to modernity). But "the West," even as a gross referent, changed drastically between the early 1600s and the 1850s. Abandoning relations with Philip III and exercising control over the first

estate does not equate to renouncing the Enlightenment, technology, or the perceived benefits of modern rationality. Studying the differing priorities of each constellation of authority on its own merits checks the impulse toward teleology.

The two parties' relationship to and reception within the diplomatic and ritual orders of their hosts differed considerably, but neither group achieved its goals. Hasekura and Sotelo made use of rituals of submission—to king, pope, and God—in order to build credibility, appeal for support, and thereby fulfill Date's charge. However, they were only able to leverage symbol into symbolic victories. The king attended Hasekura's baptism, but no longer entertained the possibility of opening New Spain to Japanese goods and ships. The pope proclaimed Hasekura a citizen of Rome, but offered little material aid. When kissing hands worked to no avail,⁸ the ambassador and his Franciscan guide opted to drag their feet, prolonging their time (and expenses) in Europe to the consternation of Philip and his Councils of State and Indies.

The Spanish monarch's three friars-cum-ambassadors arrived in Japan in August 1615, some eighteen months after the Tokugawa had expelled missionaries from the archipelago.⁹ Like Hasekura, Santa Catalina treated with multiple nodes of power, seeking audiences with Ieyasu in Sunpu and Hidetada in Edo. Unfortunately, in Tokugawa eyes Santa Catalina's group carried the empty words of a tardy king and represented an unwelcome religion. Furthermore, the party brought little to recommend it to the nascent order the Tokugawa were building, one premised on an explicit political hierarchy with the shogunate at the center and at the top. While Ieyasu lived, their reception was chilly; when he died it froze. Where Philip and the pope valued Hasekura's

⁸ "Kissing the hand" indicated paying respect to that authority figure. An early memorial from the embassy used similar language. "Memorial Presented by the Embassy to the Viceroy of New Spain," (1614). *DNS* 12-12, VII.

⁹ Ieyasu issued the edict in February 1614. Gonoï Takashi presents a timeline of these and other related events in his *Hasekura Tsunenaga* (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 2003), 265–273.

performances of submission, the Tokugawa asserted their authority by rejecting Santa Catalina and the tepid overtures of his king. Hidetada acknowledged the party through erasure, recognized it through denial, these negative acts contributing to the positive project of constructing a durable framework of commercial and diplomatic engagement. When the shogun sent everything and everyone back to New Spain back he did not bother sending a reply. Relations of a sort with the Spanish Philippines continued into the next decade, and Hasekura had yet to return to Japan, but Santa Catalina's experiences in 1615–1616 made it clear that after fifteen years of outreach, the Tokugawa program of diplomacy could no longer accommodate Spain.

Parallel Paths to Frustration

From 1614–1617, Hasekura and Santa Catalina's parallel embassies traced a figure-eight path across the globe. The Viceroy of New Spain (Guadalcázar) delayed Santa Catalina's voyage from New Spain to Japan, shaken up by the Japanese contingent's unlooked-for arrival in Acapulco in early 1614. Though the two parties overlapped in New Spain, the extant sources do not preserve any record of the principals from each group ever meeting. It is easy to imagine the friars in each delegation conversing at a Franciscan monastery in Mexico, but perhaps the viceroy's prudence overcame the groups' proximity. In the summer of 1614, Hasekura struck out eastward from Mexico overland to Veracruz and thence set out across the Caribbean and Atlantic. Santa Catalina and his party waited until the following spring to traverse the Pacific, keeping with Spain's preferred sailing schedule. The two parties converged on New Spain once again in the autumn of 1617. Santa Catalina sighted the Americas again in February 1617, sobered by a hostile sojourn in Japan and a near-fatal crossing of the Pacific.¹⁰ Hasekura and

¹⁰ In Santa Catalina's telling, the *Bautista* barely survived the crossing, which lasted over 100 days at sea. See *DNS* 12-12, CCXXXIII, cited above.

Sotelo returned that October, departing Europe long after their hosts initially hoped to be rid of them. Both parties failed, but took very different paths to similar disappointment.

Hasekura and Sotelo spent nearly three years in Europe, variably assuming the roles of ambassadors, converts, pilgrims, irritants, and freeloaders. Date Masamune and Sotelo initially orchestrated a mission premised on piety, genuine or otherwise, and the friar doubled down when confronted with the Spanish crown's reticence to pursue trade with the daimyo of Sendai and so-called King of Ōshū. Date's representatives never came close to realizing his diplomatic and commercial vision, but the arrival of a retinue from so far away disposed the crown towards hospitality, especially as it professed a love of God and goodwill toward Philip. The king attended Hasekura's baptism in Madrid in February 1615, looking on as the royal chaplain presided and Lerma served as godfather.¹¹ The mission won its greatest victory soon after, when Philip overruled his Councils of State and Indies and granted the party permission and funding to continue to Rome and present itself to Pope Paul V. The trip provided a chance to demonstrate Hasekura's—and by extension Date's—commitment to the faith, and convince the pope to take up the embassy's cause. It was the legation's last best hope to convince the Spanish monarch to give ground, by appealing and submitting to an explicitly religious authority. However, Philip's councilors anticipated and subverted these efforts, briefing the papacy on the king's positions

¹¹ According to Amati's *Historia*, Hasekura was baptized on 1615.02.17. See the relevant excerpt in *DNS* 12-12, LXII. The Papal Nuncio in Madrid also reported the baptism to Rome (*DNS* 12-12, LXIII). The *valido*, or court favorite, was the king's preferred and most trusted advisor. Lerma is often cast as the progenitor of the position in early-modern Europe, followed by the Count-Duke of Olivares in Spain and Cardinal Richelieu under Louis XIV in France, with scholarly opinions divided on the efficacy and consequences of ruling through favorites. For explorations of Lerma's role in Philip III's court, see Antonio Faros, *Kingship and Favoritism in the Spain of Philip III, 1598–1621* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000) and Patrick Williams, *The Great Favorite* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007). Lerma's influence was beginning to wane by the time Hasekura and Sotelo arrived in Europe, but the embassy still wrote the *valido* multiple times. However involved Lerma was in policy vis-à-vis Hasekura, his presence in the paper trail is slight compared to the King's councils and ambassadors—a trademark throughout his time at court, and he is consequently not discussed in detail here.

and expectations well before Hasekura entered the city and presented himself to the Holy Father in fall 1615. The pope honored Hasekura and praised Date, but did not assertively intercede on the mission's behalf.

When Sotelo and Hasekura departed Rome in January 1616, their Spanish hosts saw little incentive for them to linger in Europe, and still less reason for a strained treasury to continue bearing the cost of their presence.¹² Sotelo never abandoned the language of the leal servant, but there were no more baptisms to perform and no additional trips for the crown to fund. The mission's principals stalled for over a year, managing to remain in Spain until July 1617. A tug of war developed between the Council of the Indies urging its departure, and the mission's repeated insistence on a formal reply from Philip to Date as a pretense to remain and negotiate some sort of agreement. Illness also interceded multiple times. Hasekura twice fell ill following his trip to Rome, and Sotelo broke his leg while still in Spain. King and Council refused them further accommodation in Madrid during this time, insisting the group make for Seville and sail on to New Spain.¹³

The party spent most of the next year lodged in the outskirts of that city, the site of its initial, and warmest, reception in Spain. The bulk of the mission's Japanese attendants left on the *flota* of 1616 per the Council's orders, but the two principals stayed on, citing a need for further clarification from the king.¹⁴ The two men weathered attempts to split them apart, and Sotelo insisted upon returning to Japan. From Seville, Hasekura and Sotelo lobbied the city government,

¹² Financial struggles persisted throughout Philip III's reign. In 1607, for example, the crown's debt had climbed to 20 million ducats. See Feros, *Kingship and Favoritism*.

¹³ The mission contravened this order for a time, but departed to the friendlier city of Seville soon after.

¹⁴ Consulta del Consejo de Indias, 1616.08.27. DNS 12-12, CLXXXIII. The *flota* sent out from Spain each year to its colonies in Latin America, delivering all manner of documents, personnel, and goods. Return voyages from the colonies brought back New World silver, and this "treasure fleet" was a prime target for pirates.

the Council of the Indies, and the king at least to consent to sending missionaries, provisions for the church, and supporting the appointment of a second bishop to northeastern Japan.¹⁵ The crown initially tied a reply to the mission's departure, informing the party that it would receive Philip's response to Date in the Philippines. The tactic both encouraged Hasekura's departure and afforded the Governor-General in Manila the discretion to remit or withhold the letter as befitting the situation in Japan. The exasperated back and forth wrung an empty reply out of Philip not unlike that which he belatedly sent the Tokugawa through Santa Catalina. Two years after entering Rome to great fanfare, Hasekura and Sotelo arrived back in Mexico in October 1617, carrying letters yet returning empty-handed.

Santa Catalina hands' were just as full, and just as empty. Hidetada returned him to New Spain together with Philip's spurned gifts, mute testimony of the shogun's rebuke. Their time away shorter, their treatment harsher, and their voyage more dangerous, Philip's envoys charted a parallel path of futility in Japan. Date's ship brought the trio of friars to the archipelago in the summer of 1615. They arrived in Uraga near the growing shogunal capital of Edo, and for a brief moment the *Bautista* tethered Eastern Japan to the Americas commercially. Their hosts did not allow them to stray far, and the group remained in various states of house arrest or confinement throughout its stay. Nor was it given more than the barest provisions.¹⁶ In contrast, Philip's councilors repeatedly grumbled about costs but had coughed up the requisite funds to lodge Hasekura more often than not, especially early on. The Tokugawa had once provided for Rodrigo Vivero during his unexpected sojourn in the country half a decade earlier, but acted less

¹⁵ See, for example, Sotelo to Philip III, 1617.04.20. *DNS* 12-12, CXC. Hasekura also wrote the king in translation, no doubt with Sotelo's aid. See *DNS* 12-12, CXCI.

¹⁶ "Relacion de lo que sucedio," *DNS* 12-12, CCXXI.

hospitably to Philip's Franciscan delegation. The friars could not even leverage their own order's expulsion into grounds for taking their leave of Japan. The shogunate's Christian expulsion order mandated that all missionaries depart Japan, and that year officials began shepherding missionaries to Nagasaki for repatriation.¹⁷ Santa Catalina's group petitioned for permission to do the same. Hidetada denied them.¹⁸ The *Bautista* remained in Uraga, with the missionaries and the Spanish crew—necessary to navigate the vessel—effectively held hostage until the vessel's next departure.

Like Sotelo and Hasekura, Santa Catalina's embattled legation had to contend with multiple centers of power, most notably Tokugawa Ieyasu in Sunpu and Hidetada in Edo. The retired shogun and his son coordinated their responses to Santa Catalina to suit their ends, much as the Catholic King and Holy Father aligned their response to Sotelo's entreaties. The party met Ieyasu first. The elder Tokugawa remained the recognized head of government, but his son acted as the public face of the shogunate. The arrangement permitted Ieyasu to take his measure of the situation and decide policy prior to any official meeting between the shogun and Santa Catalina's party. In the end, the Tokugawa determined that the three friars, their gifts, and Philip's greetings did not merit a meeting with the shogun.

The climatic events of 1614–1616 in Japan did nothing to improve Santa Catalina's situation. In November 1614 Tokugawa forces laid siege to Osaka in an effort to remove the potential threat posed by Toyotomi Hideyori, the son of Tokugawa predecessor Toyotomi Hideyoshi.¹⁹ The castle fell in June 1615, ending any threat of a Toyotomi coup and confirming

¹⁷ Timon Screech, "The English and the Control of Christianity in the Early Edo Period," *Japan Review*, no. 24 (January 1, 2012),.9; Elisonas, "Christianity and the daimyo" (1991).

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Hall, "The Bakuhan System" (1991), 142–47.

Tokugawa primacy. However, rumors of Christian missionaries and converts aiding Toyotomi forces only exacerbated suspicions about the foreign religion and its entanglements with domestic political dissent.²⁰ Power passed from Ieyasu to Hidetada without incident when the elder Tokugawa passed away in June 1616, an accomplishment that had eluded his predecessors Hideyoshi and Oda Nobunaga. Now keeping his own council, Hidetada used his father's passing as a final pretext to decline any audience with Philip's envoys and ordered them gone. The *Bautista's* departure in September was the fourth and final time a vessel sailed for New Spain.

Hidetada demurred from sending Philip a reply, but he countenanced the dispatch of Date's ship and its hold full of cargo.²¹ The ship thus spoke for Hidetada and Date alike, even if the former's message was communicated in flustered friars and rejected presents. Date penned letters to authorities in New Spain, their contents more straightforward about commerce and more taciturn about matters of the faith. The Tokugawa were represented, after a fashion, by Admiral of Ships Mukai Shōgen, who sent men on the voyage to accompany Date's vassals. These unofficial representatives were likely meant to keep Mukai informed and to benefit commercially from the excursion. In sum, the *Bautista* would rid Hidetada of unwelcome guests, fetch Date's representatives back to Japan, and provide merchants and their sponsors an additional opportunity to reap the rewards of trade. Santa Catalina warned that Philip had prohibited any Spaniards from sailing directly between Japan and New Spain, but the friar's hosts paid these protestations little mind.²² The ocean proved as cruel as Hidetada had been cold,

²⁰ Screech, "The English and the Control of Christianity in the Early Edo Period"; Michael S. Laver, *The Sakoku Edicts and the Politics of Tokugawa Hegemony* (Amherst, NY: Cambria Press, 2011).

²¹ *SDS*, doc. 299.

²² "Relación," *DNS* 12-12, CCXXI.

exacting a high price in lives and cargo on the half-year voyage back to the Americas.²³ Santa Catalina, recuperating in a small village north of Acapulco, forwarded an account of his envoy's mistreatment, and his own brief report of the harrowing crossing.²⁴

The two embassies' itineraries converged once more when Hasekura and Sotelo returned to Mexico in the fall of 1617, the *Bautista* being at the time impounded in Acapulco and awaiting their return. Neither brought news or replies amenable to their sponsors, their missions defined by what they lacked rather than what they attained. Sotelo and Hasekura held a weak promise to send a few more missionaries to a land that had expelled them, but Philip's letter made no mention of trade. Santa Catalina returned with a tale of rejection and rebuke, at stark odds with Date's continued petition for a stream of ships, men, and commerce. The apparent contradiction of Tokugawa insult and Date's outreach likely vexed the viceroy and his superiors in Spain.

Both missions failed because of their patrons' divergent priorities and expectations. The priorities of each polity have been explored elsewhere. In this chapter, I bring attention to the expectations and etiquette framing the foreign relations of imperial Spain and the Tokugawa shogunate. Guided by Sotelo, Hasekura's party embedded itself within court and religious protocol as best it could, while Santa Catalina's party never managed to secure stable footing on the shifting ground of the Tokugawa diplomatic order. Neither mission bore fruit, but comparing their efforts suggests the challenges confronting polities attempting to bridge distances between localities, ideas, and authority.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ *DNS* 12-12, CCXXXIII, cited above.

Rituals of Submission

Sotelo and Hasekura premised their mission on submission, and advocated their cause through piety. Date's representatives used deference to the secular and religious authority of Catholic Europe as a tool, and attempted to leverage their spiritual dedication into a material commitment by Philip III and Pope Paul V. Date signed off on this strategy, likely originating with Sotelo. The many Japanese-language letters the daimyo entrusted to the mission make this point clear. In 1610, Tokugawa Ieyasu and Hidetada dispatched Alonzo Muñoz to Spain with a letter each; three years later Sotelo and Hasekura carried Date's salutations and petitions to the secular and religious leaders of Spain, New Spain, and the Holy See. The northern daimyo penned letters to the Viceroy of New Spain and the head of the Franciscan order in Mexico. He wrote separately to the king and pope, as well as to the head of the Franciscans in Rome. Date also sent greetings and a gift of sword and dagger to the city of Seville, Sotelo's hometown and the mission's first host in Spain. The number of letters, their intended recipients, and perhaps the idea of pushing past New Spain to Europe originated with Sotelo.²⁵

Date's 1613 writings extolled the virtues of the Christian faith while putting forth specific requests to aid his humble proxies along their way. The batch of letters bolstered the mission's claims to the spiritual sincerity of patron and ambassador alike. To all, the daimyo confessed his great respect for the word of God and fervent desire that his subjects convert to Christianity, even if "intransigent obstacles" impeded his own entrance into the communion of the faith.²⁶ To the king he requested an influx of missionaries, and the personnel and trade to enable and sustain

²⁵ Gonoï, *Hasekura Tsunenaga*, 59–62.

²⁶ Jp. 難去指合 (*sarigataki sashiai*) Date Masamune to the Comisario General of the Franciscan order in New Spain, 1613.10.17. *SDS*, doc. 72. In his letter to the Viceroy (*SDS*, doc. 70) Date cited "baseless obstacles": 無拠故障 (*yoridokoro naki koshō*).

their transport between New Spain and Japan. To the viceroy Date explained his cause and entrusted his representatives into the latter's care. To Seville he offered a similar message, while expressing his respect and best wishes for the city.²⁷ The requested aid could be spiritual as well as material, as seen in the daimyo's letter to the Franciscan Comisario-General in Rome. After explaining his intent to send Sotelo and Hasekura before the pope, Date requested that "your Holy Worship add your prayers, and those of your brethren, to the success of the mission and the Grace of God."²⁸ Date adopted an appropriately humble voice when addressing the pope, writing of his desire to "retain the blessing of His Most Holy Father for the proclamation of the faith throughout my kingdom."²⁹

The spectacle that attended the reception of Date's letters in Spain and beyond compounded their effect. Delivery and presentation of a letter from so far away was an important affair, meriting public reception, and the recitation of a translated copy of the letter. The city council of Seville, for example, called an extraordinary session to hear an oration of Date's remarks soon after the mission's arrival in Spain.³⁰ The letters thus displayed Date's spiritual sympathy and regard for temporal authority throughout the Spanish Catholic world, as well as his willingness to address and engage actors across institutions and on multiple levels.

Sotelo no doubt influenced the humble tone of these documents, well aware of the pomp and performance inherent to their presentation. Date's deference to political and religious authority in these letters, beyond simple diplomatic common sense, provided a foundation for the

²⁷ Date Masamune to the City of Seville, 1613.10.17. *SDS*, doc. 101. The flattery no doubt stemmed from Sotelo's desire to enlist the aid of his hometown.

²⁸ Date Masamune to the Franciscan Comisario-General in Rome, 1613.10.17. *SDS*, doc. 142.

²⁹ Date Masamune to Pope Paul V, 1613.10.17. *SDS*, doc. 196.

³⁰ *Actas Capitulares de Sevilla*, 1614.10.26. *DNS* 12-12, XVII.

mission to build upon when expressing its own devotion. But the friar's influence was not total; none of the letters could blot out the inconvenient fact that Date, however sympathetic to Christianity in his correspondence, had not converted to Christianity. Perhaps the multitude of letters and their epistolary humility functioned in part to make up for this faith deficit. Certainly, Hasekura and other members of the delegation tried to overcome the issue through baptism and other acts of devotion and spiritual submission.

Oration of Date's words in Seville and elsewhere raises the issue of their translation. The surviving textual evidence presents a high overall degree of fidelity whenever Japanese and Spanish-language versions of the same document exist. The one notable exception appeared in the formal terms Date proposed to Philip, a matter-of-fact list shorn of the diplomatic flourishes and humility evident in formal letters. Here, the translators, Sotelo undoubtedly among them, made two noticeable interventions. In the Japanese original, Date wrote directly to Philip, the "Great Emperor of the country of Spain" (ゑすはんやの国大帝王様, *esupan'ya no dai teiō-sama*). Furthermore, the final article of the terms treated the daimyo and the king as equivalents, reciting the full title of each and proclaiming that no discord should come between them. However, the Spanish translation introduced the terms as a proposal Date made to the viceroy of New Spain, and omitted the final article listing Date and Philip together.³¹ The switch avoided the offensive suggestion that a subject of the Japanese "Emperor" (as the Spanish often referred to the Tokugawa) could address the sovereign of Spain on nominally equal ground.

The second major alteration in the same document strengthened the language concerning the Dutch. In Japanese, Date promised that "The English, Dutch, or anyone from a country Your

³¹ For the Japanese text, see Draft of Agreement sent by Date Masamune to Philip III, 1613.10.17. *SDS*, doc. 141. For the Spanish text, see AGS,EST,LEG,256,1,2. The title for the Spanish translations reads, "*Capitulaciones y asienta de pazes entre el rey de Voxu Ydate Masamune y el Virrey de nueva España.*"

Majesty deems an enemy who come [to Sendai] will not be respected in my realm,” but in Spanish the daimyo proved more bellicose: “[I] will have justice of all of them [the Dutch, etc.] and order them killed.”³² The translators—inevitably Sotelo and other friars—recognized that trade with Spain required renouncing the crown's rebellious subjects in the strongest possible terms. Their alternations positioned Date as a potential guarantor to the terms of the 1609 treaty banning Dutch activity in Asia in more forceful terms than the original. Date would thus uphold Spanish religion and the Spanish diplomatic order in return for direct access to New Spain.

In contrast to the statement of terms, the bulk of Date's 1613 correspondence introduced the mission to potential supporters and patrons, and appear to have been accurately translated. The letters made excuses for Date's continued paganism but did not deny it. Beyond this unfortunate fact, the letters' purpose and intended recipients derived from consultation with Sotelo, leaving little incentive for alteration or exaggeration. The translation of Date's letter to the pope was made in Japan, the Latin script followed by Date's seal and the date in Japanese (see Image 8).³³ The letter remains in the Vatican archives today. Similarly, the Tokugawa letters to the viceroy Sebastián Vizcaíno carried back to New Spain on the *Bautista* had also been translated in Japan with the aid of friars, Sotelo among them.³⁴

³² Ibid. The Japanese reads “いんぎりす、おらんです、何も帝王之為敵国より参候者、我等国に而ハ崇敬申間敷候。” The full quote in Spanish is as follows: “*Iten, á los yngleses y olandeses y á qualesquier otros que fueren enemigos del Rey de España y si binieren á mi reyno haré justicia de todos ellos y los mandaré matar.*”

³³ Confirming the translation process conclusively for each source is difficult. Some of the Japanese originals sent to Europe have been lost, and for others only copies of the translated letters survive. However, between Date's internal records and the holdings of European archives it is generally possible to obtain a Japanese and European-language version of each letter and compare.

³⁴ See *DNS* 12-9, pp. 959–981. Sotelo must have aided in the translation prior to his damaging falling out with Vizcaíno. Vizcaíno delivering these letters, the only missives from the Tokugawa on the *Bautista*, no doubt undermined Sotelo's arguments that he spoke for the shogunate as well as accompanying Date's mission.

Sotelo and Hasekura augmented the proclamations of their not-quite-Christian lord by unequivocally demonstrating their own faith. To this end, baptism became a fixture of the mission's ceremonial life while abroad in the Americas and Europe. The Mexico resident and Nahuas chronicler Chimalpahin noted dozens of Japanese being baptized at a Mexico cathedral in April 1614.³⁵ The registry of baptisms for the city of Rome records a Japanese being baptized in November 1615.³⁶ Only a few Japanese journeyed to Rome, and Hasekura had already been baptized in Madrid, meaning that most if not all of the Japanese then present converted to Christianity. Scipione Amati's history of the mission corroborates the baptisms in Mexico and Rome.³⁷ Still later, Date's appointed captain on the *Bautista*'s return, Yokozawa Shōgen, was baptized in Mexico during the vessel's second sojourn in New Spain.³⁸

As it involved Date's principal Japanese representative, Hasekura's baptism offered the most symbolic import, and the mission planned accordingly. Hasekura sought his baptism not in Mexico or even Rome, but in Madrid, where the mission could incorporate Philip III directly into the ritual of its leader's birth into the Christian faith. The group decided this course of action in New Spain, if not before. Chimalpahin's diary records that the "Japanese ambassador" originally intended to be baptized along with his brethren in Mexico, but then decided to hold off on the ceremony until the party reached Spain.³⁹ Amati's *History* reported a similar reappraisal.⁴⁰ Once

³⁵ Domingo Francisco de San Antón Muñón Chimalpahin Cuauhtlehuanitzin, *Annals of HisTime: Don Domingo de San Antón Muñón Chimalpahin Quauhtlehuanitzin* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2006).

³⁶ Register of Baptisms, 1615.11.15. *DNS* 12-12, CXXVIII.

³⁷ Amati's *Historia*, Chapters 17 & 31.

³⁸ Letter from Luis Sotelo to the President of the Council of the Indies, 1618.02.03. *DNS* 12-12, CCI.

³⁹ Chimalpahin, *Annals of His Time*, 277.

⁴⁰ Amati, *Historia*, Chapter 17.

in Spain, the mission placed Hasekura's baptism at the heart of its diplomatic efforts. Hasekura purportedly expressed his desire to be baptized by the king's own hand during his audience with Philip, thereby integrating his spiritual well-being into the public ceremony of state.⁴¹ Baptism at the hand of the king promised to extend the public and ceremonial relationship between monarch and ambassador, ensuring another venue for contact with the royal person, and another opportunity to make an impression at court.⁴²

Hasekura's request also exemplified the mission's use of strategic submission, tactfully raising its own profile through acts of religious and spiritual subservience. Specifically, Hasekura requested that Philip serve as his godfather in the ceremony, in the absence of any other relative or proxy to fulfill the role. The king would become the ambassador's spiritual father and sponsor, establishing a relationship with the potential for religious and material support. The petition blended the diplomatic goal of establishing the trust and goodwill of the monarchy with the spiritual justification for the mission's arrival and agenda. Hasekura devoting himself to the Lord above strengthened his ability to serve his secular lord's interests in Spain. It also provided a potential bridge between the retainer's terrestrial patron in Japan and his spiritual godfather in Spain, a connection upon which Date and Philip might establish a relationship along the lines proposed by the former.

Philip demurred from Hasekura's request, unwilling to involve the crown's prestige in relations with Hasekura's unproven patron. In the end Lerma served as Hasekura's godfather,

⁴¹ "Relación que propuso el Embajador del Japón al Rey de España..." (1615). *DNS* 12-12, LIX.

⁴² Direct contact with the king was a rare privilege. Following the mission's audience with Philip III, decision-making was handled almost exclusively through communication via the Councils of State and Indies. Philip never received Hasekura in audience again.

tying the Japanese retainer to an important figure at court.⁴³ The royal chaplain presided over the baptism in a monastery with the king and other luminaries looking on.⁴⁴ Even if the king did not assume direct responsibility over Hasekura's spiritual life, Philip witnessed his conversion to the faith and gave it his blessing through his royal presence. Date's representative had demonstrated his submission to and acceptance of God, and had done so before the Catholic king charged with overseeing expansion of the Church across his formal empire and beyond.

Political calculation and the expression of devotion played off one another. The party consciously chose to "stage" Hasekura's baptism, and to do it at a place and in a manner designed best to serve the interests of the mission. Faith in God did not obviate the value of political theater, a fact the Catholic King and the Holy Father both recognized. Yokozawa's 1617 baptism in Mexico adopted a similar pattern of welding individual salvation to Spanish secular authority. Absent a king, Date's captain requested that the incoming Governor-General of the Philippines, Don Alonso Fajardo de Entenza, serve as his godfather in the ceremony. Fajardo agreed, and the service bound the Japanese captain of Date's ship to the political head of the Spanish Philippines. Ultimately, the *Bautista* and the governor-general's flotilla embarked together across the Pacific to Manila, and the baptism ceremony may have also facilitated coordination and communication on the long voyage. Sotelo noted Yokozawa's conversion and the governor-general's

⁴³ Lerma's influence reached its apogee in the first decade of the seventeenth century. By 1615 the *valido's* grasp on the strings of government was more tenuous, though he would not "fall" until 1618. At the time of Hasekura's baptism Lerma remained the most prominent figure at court, and he helped direct the flow of information to the Councils of State and Indies as they responded to Date's mission.

⁴⁴ See Amati, *Historia*, Chapters 20–22; Letter from Papal Nuncio at Madrid to Cardinal Borghese, 1615.02.23. DNS 12-12, LXIII.

participation, in his final, desperate round of letters from Mexico in 1618 pleading for the crown's support following disappointment in Europe and worsening conditions in Japan.⁴⁵

The friar's missives formed the backbone of the mission's correspondence while in Europe from 1614 to 1617, building on Date's carefully-worded introductions and the theater afforded by baptismal ceremonies and processions. Necessity, strategy, and his position within the mission allowed Sotelo to adopt the language of submission in both political and religious terms to a degree his patron and companion could not. Date spoke of the appeal of Christianity and flattered the recipients of his letters, but this language only carried so far, given that the daimyo had not formally converted. Just as importantly, Date wrote to propose contact with the king's missionaries and subjects, but did not pledge himself to the sovereign. As his proposed "term sheet" implied, he wrote as a potential partner for the king. The daimyo's 1613 letter also made reference to Japan's own *teiō-sama* (帝王様), the Tokugawa, indicating Date's simultaneous role as sovereign and subject, a factor that further complicated Spain's response.

Sotelo's voice also drowned out Hasekura's, perhaps as much then as now. Hasekura addressed the king and called on officials, but always with Sotelo by his side to translate. I am not aware of any extant document recording the ambassador speaking in Spanish. Hasekura likely developed some facility with the language during his seven years abroad, but opted not to use it in any official capacity. Perhaps this was a conscious decision both to maintain the mission's dignity and to stoke curiosity about the man who had traveled from so far away. Hasekura also spoke with his composure, his body, and the performance inherent to his station as a foreign representative. By all accounts, he comported himself well, both in formal setting such

⁴⁵ DNS 12-12, CCI & CCII.

as his baptism and in less formal visits to officials.⁴⁶ However, meetings with the king proved a rare event; Philip officially met with Hasekura once in early 1615, despite the party spending over two and a half years in Europe.⁴⁷ The back-and-forth of presenting petitions and lobbying for its cause required correspondence with the machine of government—primarily the Councils—and patrons who might intercede on the mission's behalf. This fact propelled Sotelo to the forefront of the mission and allowed him to set the agenda.

Sotelo's role as the mission's voice, his concurrent calling as a Franciscan friar, and his status as a subject of Castile allowed him to frame the mission in terms of service and submission to crown and church alike. Once in Europe, Sotelo presented Date as sincere, Hasekura as devout, and the mission as a spiritual undertaking and a great service to Philip III and Paul V. The friar's requests to the Council of the Indies in spring 1614 provides an example of his efforts to frame the mission in terms of the needs of the church. Responding to the Council's demand for a formal list of requests, Sotelo provided the following six: permission to travel to Rome along with funding for the journey and the journey back to Japan; the establishment of additional bishoprics in Japan not controlled by the Jesuits; permission for additional mendicant missionaries to be sent to Japan directly from New Spain; funds to purchase wine, altarpieces, catechisms, and other necessary materials; and construction funds for a seminary lodging for native converts; and finally, permission for Date to send trading vessels to New Spain.⁴⁸

⁴⁶ Officials in Seville, the head of the Spanish *Casa de Contratación*, and the Spanish ambassador to Rome all commented positively on bearing of Hasekura and his companions. For an example from Rome, see Spanish Ambassador at Rome to the King of Spain, 1616.01.08. *DNS* 12-12, CLVII.

⁴⁷ The king also offered his congratulations to Hasekura at the retainer's baptism, but this encounter did not take the form of an audience.

⁴⁸ Consulta del Consejo de Indias, 1614.04.02. *DNS* 12-12, LXVI.

Compare this list of pious requests to Date's proposed agreement between himself and the king (or the viceroy, depending on the translation used). The Spanish version contained eight articles: a request for missionaries to be sent to Ōshū; permission for Date's ships to anchor and trade in New Spain; the ability to hire Spanish pilots and mariners for the crossing; offer of safe harbor for Spanish ships in Date's ports; provisions and rigging at a fair price; the option for Spanish to build ships in Ōshū, again with materials at a fair price; the right for Spaniards to build houses and reside in Date's lands; refusing—and in the Spanish version, killing—any Dutch arriving in the daimyo's lands.⁴⁹

Sotelo and Date's lists both concerned themselves with logistics, albeit of a very different sort. Date's Japanese letters led with the missionaries, both in the terms above and in his letters to officials in Europe. In the latter he consistently downplayed commercial motivation, requesting permission to pack cargo of “items from that country [New Spain] for our use” (其国之道具、我等用所之ためにて, *sono kuni no dōgu, warera yōsho no tame nite*).⁵⁰ However, all of the remaining articles, except the discussion of the Dutch, addressed the mechanics of Japanese and Spanish ships and goods moving across the Pacific. The daimyo prioritized managing the expected flow of people, goods, ships, knowledge, and technology that would attend the arrival of any missionaries.

Sotelo adopted the opposite approach in early 1615, dwelling on the specific requirements of the church in Date's "kingdom." The friar fleshed out his patron's straightforward

⁴⁹ “Capitulaciones y asientos de pazes...,” (1614?). *DNS* 12-12, LX. This is the translation of Date's proposal to Philip III (*SDS*, doc. 141). I summarize the Spanish-language text here as it was the document officials understood.

⁵⁰ Date to the viceroy of New Spain, 1613.10.17. *SDS*, doc. 70. The Spanish-language memorial drafted by the embassy similarly suggested that any commerce covering more than the price of the voyage “would be used on presents and items of this land [New Spain] for the service of his [Date's] house” (*se enplee en regalos y cosas desta tierra para el servicio de su casa*). See *DNS* 12-12, VII.

request for missionaries by addressing the needs of the religious and lay community, their standing within the Church's hierarchy, and the materials required to house, clothe, and properly instruct the faithful, new and old. Sotelo also assigned a specific value to these requests, laying out the costs of each, dealing in a level of specificity Date had diplomatically avoided.⁵¹ However, the friar downplayed discussion of how these missionaries, resources, and money might reach their intended destination, in contrast to Date's more focused proposal on how to do just that.

Sotelo also prefaced requests for the church in northeastern Japan with a more immediate petition that the mission be granted permission, passage, and adequate funding for a trip to Rome. In so doing, he cast the legation as a pilgrimage seeking the spiritual betterment of the mission's ambassador and sponsor, all for the greater glory of faith. Hasekura had come to "give obedience" (*dar la obediencia*) to the king and "kiss the foot" (*besar el pie*) of the pope in Rome in Date's stead.⁵² These were common expressions of respect in European courts, but the use of this language, even in translation, contrasts starkly with earlier Tokugawa efforts.

Hasekura would build on his baptism by confirming his submission to the faith and its principal servant on earth. The remaining requests regarding the church in Japan proceeded from this original act of faith in Rome, linking the mission's actions in Europe to the service of God and his Catholic King in the Indies. "Service" was a common refrain among the king's councilors and petitioners. The latter defined their labors and requests in terms of the "service" provided to the king.⁵³ Philip's councils sorted through information and issued advice in terms of how the

⁵¹ DNS 12-12, LXVI (cited above).

⁵² These phrases are repeated in multiple letters. For an example of "*dar la obediencia*," see Juan Gallardo de Cespedes to the King of Spain, 1614.10.14. DNS 12-12, XV. For "*besar el pie*," see DNS 12-12, VII.

⁵³ DNS 12-12, VII contains one such example.

king might best be served. When the Council of State presented Philip with multiple options, they often closed with a refrain like “His Majesty will order that which would be best served” or something similar.⁵⁴ Sotelo employed this language throughout his correspondence, defining all of the mission's activities and proposals in terms of their service to Philip. Here his double status as ambassador and subject of the crown allowed him to adopt a language of servitude not seen in Date's letters. The daimyo had written pious letters to the pope and other officials, well aware that his representatives would attempt the journey to Rome. However, in Date's missives the trip to Rome was an assumed part of the mission's itinerary. Confronted with official skepticism, Sotelo folded the excursion into the objectives of the mission, bundled together with support for the church in northeastern Japan and commerce between Ōshū and New Spain. Pointedly, though Date announced his representatives' intent to go to Rome when addressing Philip, the daimyo did not frame the journey as dependent on the king's good graces, and his proposed terms did not mention the trip at all.⁵⁵ Sotelo, confronting the headwinds of Spanish officialdom, explicitly subordinated the mission's movement to the king's prerogative. The voyage became patronized by one European leader so that it might pay respects to another, and symbolized Hasekura's (and by rhetorical extension, Date's) submission to Spain's political and religious authority.

Service, submission, and sponsorship featured in Sotelo's writings from the beginning, but his failure to establish himself as a Tokugawa spokesman turned piety into the friar's primary diplomatic currency. The Spanish crown remained unconvinced of his earlier claims to speak for the “Emperor” of Japan (Tokugawa Ieyasu), weakening the friar's arsenal of secular arguments.

⁵⁴ Consulta del Consejo de Estado, 1614.11.22. *DNS* 12-12, LI.

⁵⁵ Date did request Philip's goodwill, but the trip to Rome is assumed, however humbly. That Sotelo had to lobby for the excursion is another sign of the mission's ambivalent response at the court in Madrid.

Sections of Sotelo's earliest writings during the mission had comprised a concise geopolitical manifesto on how commercial relations between Date's domain and New Spain could serve the royal interest. He argued that increased commerce with Japan would significantly decrease the amount of silver flowing west out of the America, augmenting Philip's coffers in a time of financial distress.⁵⁶ He promised safer, reliable transport between Manila and Acapulco once Date's ports were integrated into Spain's maritime network. Sotelo also asserted that Spain's gain in Japan would be the Low Countries' loss, as neither Date nor the Tokugawa would see the benefit in permitting the Dutch to remain active in the area. All of these arguments responded to contemporary critics who foretold Japanese piracy off the coast of New Spain, warned that Japan would drain silver away rather than provide it, and advised that Tokugawa hostility would make deeper commercial ties untenable.⁵⁷

To be sure, Sotelo tethered these commercial arguments and political considerations to the potential benefits for the church, but he also tied them to his purported familiarity with and support from the Tokugawa. As argued earlier, Sotelo initially presented himself as a Tokugawa representative traveling in tandem with Date's ambassador, but his Spanish peers hotly contested these assertions and the crown never accepted them.⁵⁸ The friar claimed Tokugawa credentials up until his arrival in Spain in the fall of 1614, but the following year Sotelo limited himself to speaking for Date and abandoned geopolitical rhetoric in favor of the spiritual potential of the mission. His petitions to Philip's councils dealt less and less with commerce, and instead devoted

⁵⁶ Sotelo to Philip III, *DNS* 12-12, III. This entire paragraph phrases Sotelo's arguments to the king.

⁵⁷ Spanish attitudes toward the balance of trade among the Philippines, New Spain, and Asia will be discussed in more depth in Chapter 4. Vizcaino voiced some of these concerns in his letters to Salinas and Philip. See *DNS* 12-12, XLV & XLIX.

⁵⁸ See Chapter 2.

themselves to spiritual matters and their budgetary requirements, as seen above. Sotelo returned to political punditry later, but under more strained circumstances.

Stripped of the ability to negotiate between sovereigns, the mission requested favor through the role of pilgrim, believer, and servant. What the visitors from overseas could not bargain for as ambassadors they might be able to request as devout members of the faith. Devotion required demonstration, but might be rewarded with patronage.

The baptism and trip to Rome hewed this rhetorical line, but Sotelo pursued other lines of petition as well. In spring 1615, Hasekura requested that the king admit him into the Order of Santiago, a military-religious confraternity tasked with protecting the faith and protecting pilgrims on the Camino de Santiago.⁵⁹ Formed in the twelfth century during the Reconquista, by the seventeenth century membership had been restricted to the nobility and the order itself was administered by the crown. Adding Hasekura to its ranks would establish one more institutional link to the monarchy, symbolically integrating Hasekura into Spanish nobility and recognizing him as a protector of his new faith. The Council would have none of it. The body pointed out the obvious, that Hasekura would have no way of fulfilling the Order's functions from Japan. It pointed out the equally conspicuous fact that Sotelo was the source of the request.⁶⁰

Even before Hasekura's baptism in February 1615 the Council of the Indies was citing the costs of maintaining the embassy and the burden of housing it, and recommended that the party be dealt with quickly.⁶¹ The Council rebuffed the request for entrance into the Order; and advised against any trip to Rome. Well aware that Sotelo sought to play politics with piety, the

⁵⁹ Consulta del Consejo de Indias, 1615.04.29. *DNS* 12-12, LXVIII.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

⁶¹ *DNS* 12-12, LXI. Altogether, between twenty to thirty Japanese had ventured to Spain.

Council wanted the mission homeward bound as soon as possible. As for Sotelo's other requests, the advisory body sidestepped most of the issues—most importantly the question of establishing another bishopric in Japan—and released a fraction of the funds the friar requested.⁶² If the king's advisors had gotten their way, Sotelo and Hasekura would have been back on a ship to New Spain in 1615, attended by a few extra books, a few extra missionaries, and orders to return to Japan via the Philippines rather than the direct route Date sought.

But for once, Sotelo won the day. In the mission's greatest (and perhaps only) victory, Philip overruled his advisors and granted the mission leave to continue on to Rome, along with funds to support it on the journey.⁶³ The king approved their voyage in the spring, and Hasekura, Sotelo, and roughly a half-dozen others departed for Rome in early fall 1615.

Hasekura's and Sotelo's entry into Rome lifted the mission to its high-water mark in Europe. Philip had kept the party waiting more than two months before receiving them in court, and then only once. Pope Paul V met Hasekura twice within a week of his arrival. The second, more formal reception took place in the Quirinale Palace. That November Spain's ambassador to the papacy, El Conde de Castro, favorably compared the legation's reception to that extended to a Persian embassy a few years prior.⁶⁴ Castro reported that the reception differed little from that afforded to “the ambassadors of the [Holy Roman?] Emperor and the kings of France and Spain” aside from the pope's dress and the chamber used for the audience.⁶⁵ The prominent Borghese family—of which the pope and his nephew, councilor, and cardinal Borghese were both

⁶² Consulta del Consejo de Indias, 1615.04.02. *DNS* 12-12, LXVI.

⁶³ Ibid. The monarchy granted the party 4,000 ducats for the trip. For reference to this sum, see Memorial of Father Sotelo, 1615.08.06. *DNS* 12-12, LXXVII.

⁶⁴ Spanish Ambassador to Rome to Philip III, 1615.11.12. *DNS* 12-12, CXV.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

members—guided the party around the city and the grounds of the family villa.⁶⁶ In mid-November a Japanese member of the group was baptized in front of Cardinal Borghese, further cementing the patronage ties between the papacy and the embassy.⁶⁷ Not a week later, the senate bestowed Roman citizenship upon Hasekura and five others, a mix of Japanese and their Spanish Franciscan guides.⁶⁸ Inscribed on a sheet of rich vellum, Hasekura's certificate of citizenship is a visually striking document preserved today in the Sendai City Museum (Image 7). The document addressed Hasekura by his newly-acquired Christian name, in bold script: PHILIPPO FRANCISCO FAXECURA ROCVYEMON. "Philip" for the king he sought, "Francisco" for the order that guided him, recognized by the civil authority at the heart of Catholic Europe. The mission's patronage had thus been inscribed into the very name of its head delegate.

As in Madrid before, Sotelo attempted to use ceremonial acts of submission as grounds to pursue the mission's agenda. The group presented Date's letter to the pope (Image 8), and Sotelo lobbied for the same points he had pressed in court: materials, missionaries, and a new bishopric in northeastern Japan.⁶⁹ The legation also presented Paul V with a letter on behalf of the Christian community in Japan, declaring their faith and requesting his favor. Individuals from the area around Osaka, Sakai, and Kyoto, signed the document, presented by Sotelo and three Japanese Christians.⁷⁰ The papacy duly recorded meeting with three Japanese acting as

⁶⁶ Borghese's art collection and estate now form the Villa Borghese, a prominent museum and park in Rome.

⁶⁷ Register of Baptisms, 1615.11.15. *DNS* 12-12, CXXVIII. See Amati, *Historia*, Chapter 31 (*DNS* 12-12, CXXV) as well.

⁶⁸ "Decreti di consigli magistrato e cittadini Romani," 1615.11.19. *DNS* 12-12, CXL. One of the Japanese was the merchant Itami Sōmi. Scipione Amati, the author of the *Historia*, also received this honor.

⁶⁹ The papal response to Sotelo's memorializing is extant. See "Answers to the demands of the Japanese embassy," (1615) *DNS* 12-12, CXLVIII.

⁷⁰ Gono, *Hasekura Tsunenaga*, 159–163.

"ambassadors of Japan's Christians," alongside Hasekura serving as the "ambassador of the Kingdom of Voxu [Ōshū]."⁷¹ Spain had never recognized any such "ambassadors," suggesting the mission indulged in some improvisation or misinterpretation on the road to Rome. The group hoped that their letters, pleas, and faith would translate into papal intercession back in Philip's court. Sotelo needed to walk a very tight line, requesting the pope's intercession without directly complaining about their treatment at the hands of the king who had sponsored their journey to Italy. An undated memorial to the papacy likely drafted by Sotelo thus praised the Spanish king's hospitality while acknowledging that "on the matters of trade and communication with New Spain [the embassy has] seen difficulties in the councils for reasons and matters of state."⁷² The document moved on to ask for papal favor, mercy, and honor without specifically requesting that the pontiff lobby for trade, its author content to elaborate on the benefits of the arrangement and trust the recipient to make the connection. Commerce and missionary work were the means and ends of the mission, but exactly which was which remained difficult to decipher. Stripped of secular authority, the group doubled down on piety as the only feasible means of negotiating on Date's behalf, in the process symbolically binding themselves to other patrons spiritual and secular alike. However, as the acknowledgment of certain "difficulties" attested, symbolic submission needed to inspire patronage beyond the realm of ritual.

"Escaping with one's life among such grand tyrants is like receiving it out of mercy"

Both missions asked their hosts for too much and offered too little. Sotelo and Hasekura asked Philip to reorganize relations between the Spanish Indies and Asia in exchange for the support of an unknown "king" who was yet uncommitted to God but apparently committed to

⁷¹ ASV, Sec. Brev., 532 195.

⁷² ASV, Fondo Borghese, I, 209, 331V.

trade. Fray Diego Santa Catalina and his fellow friars asked the Tokugawa to extend their protection to a group whose presence they had outlawed in exchange for the gratitude of a distant sovereign who thought much of his God but much less of replying punctually or responding to any of the shogunate's proposals. In the face of a skeptical reception Sotelo pivoted to piety, but this was not an option for Santa Catalina and his companions. They had not come to submit to anything, but to deliver the message and gifts of their king.

It is unclear if Santa Catalina and his companions recognized how singularly ill-prepared they were to face the political climate in Japan. Philip III ordered them well-provisioned with gifts: portraits of royalty, crystal glass, soap, leather goods, and other fineries, but the group possessed little else of value.⁷³ Philip neutered the group's letter when he ordered its revision and the omission of any language discussing or permitting trade. Santa Catalina spent a year in New Spain awaiting Madrid's direction. The back-and-forth cost the group another precious resource: time. Even before Santa Catalina's initial departure from Spain, the entire enterprise stalled a year as the crown paused to gather more information from Asia before it committed to sending a reply to the Tokugawa. When Rodrigo de Vivero departed on the first Japanese ship bound for New Spain in 1610, he promised a reply from the king of Spain within two years.⁷⁴ Santa Catalina arrived three years late. Much had changed, and their hosts were impatient.

The embassy also traveled without its intended leader, Fray Alonso Muñoz. The friar was singularly qualified for the endeavor; Philip's court held him in high esteem and the Tokugawa shogunate had entrusted him with its letters to Spain in 1610. When illness and ill-timing

⁷³ See Chapter for a discussion of these gifts.

⁷⁴ Josef Franz Schütte, "Don Rodrigo de Vivero de Velazco y Sebastián Vizcaíno en Japón (1609–1610, 1611–1613)," in de la Torre Villar Ernesto, ed., *La Expansión Hispanoamericana En Asia: Siglos XVI Y XVII* (México: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1980).

prevented Muñoz from departing Spain prior to Santa Catalina's departure the embassy lost its best potential mediator between the two polities. Absent Muñoz, the court pressed ahead with Santa Catalina and two other friars, three missionaries sailing for Japan just as the shogunate committed to their order's expulsion in 1614. The Spanish court's selection of friars appears to have been deliberate, an attempt to follow the precedent the Tokugawa themselves had established by dispatching Muñoz earlier.⁷⁵ The gesture toward reciprocity actually worked against the party, which fared poorly in Muñoz's absence.

Worse, Philip's letters to Ieyasu and Hidetada lacked substance, and did little to recommend Spain to Tokugawa leadership. The final version did not mention trade, even to equivocate or otherwise delay resolving the issue.⁷⁶ In 1609–1610 Ieyasu and Rodrigo de Vivero had discussed specific issues—miners from New Spain, access to ports—that Philip rejected by refusing to acknowledge. Philip acknowledged, but paid little heed to Ieyasu's 1610 correspondence welcoming Spanish traffic to any port in Japan. Furthermore, in 1612 Ieyasu asked that the Spanish keep their Catholic God to themselves in a letter Vizcaíno brought back on the *Bautista*. Exchanges of men, technology, and provisions did not necessitate the presence of missionaries and their religion, at least in Tokugawa eyes. Philip responded to Ieyasu's clearly stated position on Christianity by “affectionately entrusting to Your Serenity the missionaries in those kingdoms who live in service to our true God.”⁷⁷ This language dated to Philip's initial 1613 draft reply. Given the opportunity to revise the letter the next year, the monarchy had omitted discussion of trade but opted to keep what it knew to be provocative language regarding

⁷⁵ The choice of Franciscans as envoys is mentioned in the aforementioned anonymous report from one of the friars in Japan, *DNS* 12-12, CCXXI.

⁷⁶ Philip III to Ieyasu, 1613.06.20. *DNS* 12-12, CCXVI.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

Christianity. The Tokugawa would now have to decide what to do about the dimming trade prospects and their missionary guests.

The shogunate coordinated its response—official and unofficial—through the two poles of Tokugawa power: the “retired” Ieyasu's complex in Sunpu, and the shogunate's seat in Edo headed by his son Hidetada. Ieyasu remained in power until his death in June 1616, operating unconstrained as retired shogun (大御所, *Ōgosho*) while Hidetada served as the official head of government. The dual system served the shogunate well in addressing its unwelcome guests and unhelpful correspondence.⁷⁸ Santa Catalina and his companions first traveled to Sunpu, where they delivered their letter to Ieyasu and the elder Tokugawa took his measure of them. This order reflected the reality of Ieyasu's continued preeminence in Japan. Philip knew it as well, and his letter to Ieyasu was the more important document; he only wrote to Hidetada out of courtesy and on the advice of Muñoz back in Madrid. The separation between effective and official power allowed the shogunate to discern Philip's intentions and disposition without granting his representatives an audience with the nominal head of government. Before they proceeded to their audience with Hidetada, Ieyasu traveled to Edo and conferred with his son.⁷⁹ There was little incentive to permit an audience with the shogun, and Philip's envoys never received one. By one friar's account Hidetada first delayed the meeting, and after Ieyasu's death used the mourning period for his father as a pretext to avoid the party. The same friar ruefully pointed out that Hidetada's grief did not prevent him from meeting the English and Dutch. The shogun also refused Philip's gifts, and in time even those presents Ieyasu had accepted were returned.

⁷⁸ Hidetada followed his father's example and “retired” to allow his son Iemitsu to ascend to the position of shogun. Iemitsu, however, served as shogun until his death in 1651. By that time Tokugawa succession was secure, and the practice of a retired elder coexisting with a reigning heir was discontinued.

⁷⁹ *DNS* 12-12, CCXXI. The rest of the paragraph cites details from this document.

Such actions excluded Philip's embassy from the evolving Tokugawa diplomatic order, and denied the king's mission recognition. Ieyasu's "retirement" allowed him to vet the embassy without the shogunate having to mount an official response. The party spent over a year in Japan fretting over its fate and trying to discern its hosts' intentions. By avoiding an audience and ignoring Philip's gifts, Hidetada also circumvented the need to draft any formal reply. In Rome at this same time, Sotelo endeavored to play one sovereign against the other, only to be foiled by their coordination. Santa Catalina confronted two authorities as well, albeit within the same polity. In this instance two generations of Tokugawa worked together so that Philip's letter could be received without being recognized.

The experiences of Santa Catalina's group stand in stark contrast to Vivero's time in Japan in 1610 and Vizcaino's uneven stay in 1612–1613. Ieyasu's hardening toward the Spanish is evident in the manner of the men's reception. Vivero reported engaging in conversation with both Ieyasu and Hidetada when they each received him. In the former case, Vivero claimed to receive an apology of sorts before being led into Ieyasu's audience chamber when an official told him not to take offense at the burdens of protocol. The accidental diplomat reported a similar scene with Hidetada prior: being led into the audience chamber, sitting at a respectful distance to the shogun's side, and conversing for a time. Pointedly, Hidetada and Vivero discussed Spanish shipping at some length.⁸⁰ Vivero smoothed over tensions regarding matters of protocol in his account, wishing to cast himself and his relationship with Tokugawa leadership in a positive light. What he represented as formal but genial conversation may have been more restrained and regulated than reported, but did not leave the man feeling mistreated.

⁸⁰ See Chapter 1, as well as Michael Cooper, *An Unscheduled Visit: Rodrigo de Vivero in Japan, 1609-1610* (Tokyo: Asiatic Society of Japan, 2008). Details from this paragraph come from Cooper's translations of Vivero's account.

Santa Catalina's audience was a different matter. His group was brought to Ieyasu, and its audience with the elder Tokugawa was a solemn affair with no direct interaction.⁸¹ The party had waited two months for this meeting, during which time it bore the cost of its own accommodation.⁸² If a subsequent account is to be believed, the three clergymen paid four times the rate of the other Spaniards who arrived on the *Bautista*, presumably on account of being friars. When finally granted an audience, they presented their gifts with their faces to the ground. They retreated silently, not a single word spoken for greetings, questions, or negotiations, to say nothing of a conversation. Lower officials told them they must now attend the court of the "prince" in Edo to receive an official response. That response never came. One friar compared the ritual of their reception to that of the Dutch, noting the deep bow and lack of any verbal acknowledgement, in stark contrast to Vivero's friendly chats with Ieyasu and Hidetada. The rules were changing, and the shogunate had no qualms treating the Spanish throne and its rebellious subjects on equal footing.

The shogunate closely monitored and controlled the embassy's movement during the entirety of its stay. Santa Catalina and his companions were placed under the supervision of Mukai Shōgen, the principal point of contact between Date and the shogunate regarding the construction and dispatch of the *Bautista*. The group moved among Sunpu, Edo, and Uraga as needs dictated, at one point having to stay onboard the docked *Bautista* for want of accommodation. Seeing the situation for hopeless, the trio petitioned to journey south and book passage on a ship bound for the Philippines. This request too was denied, and the friars felt more

⁸¹ Geography likely played a hand in deciding the order of audience as well. Vivero shipwrecked off the coast of present-day Chiba prefecture, northeast of Edo (Tokyo). He thus had to pass through Hidetada's seat in Edo to get to Ieyasu's stronghold in Sunpu, now Shizuoka City. Santa Catalina arrived in the *Bautista* and docked in Uraga southwest of Edo, between the shogunal capital and Sunpu.

⁸² *DNS* 12-12, CCXXI. Unless otherwise noted, details from Santa Catalina's time in Japan stem from this source.

like prisoners than envoys. Eventually the embassy settled in Uraga, where the Spanish crew of the *Bautista* was being detained.⁸³

The leash provided Vivero and Vizcaíno had been much longer. Vivero received permission to journey to Nagasaki in search of a vessel bound for the Philippines, and freedom of movement had been integral to Vizcaíno's mission and soundings in Japan. Where Vizcaíno sailed on his own ship, and Vivero traversed much of the country by land and sea, the three friars stayed under close supervision, at their own cost, their fate uncertain. The friar's account gave little notice to the Spanish sailors, but it appears that they were also restricted to Uraga and kept close to the *Bautista* for the duration of their stay. The ship would not return with a letter, but to return at all it needed sailors capable of navigating to the Americas.

Adam Clulow has noted that “while Ieyasu was alive, no embassy was turned away and no letter left unanswered,” but he may have broken precedent if he had lived another six months.⁸⁴ Philip's embassy arrived in August 1615, Ieyasu passed away in June 1616, and the embassy departed for New Spain in late September of that year. The elder Tokugawa did receive Santa Catalina and Philip's gifts in fall 1615, but then ordered the party to journey to Hidetada for a response. Ieyasu also proceeded to Edo to consult with his son, and the party learned that Hidetada was disinclined to receive Philip's gifts. Furthermore, Ieyasu was not pleased with those he had received, nor did he appreciate the choice of envoys. The elder Tokugawa “had been very upset that we [friars] carried [Philip's] message, as he was working to expel all missionaries from the kingdom.”⁸⁵ Hidetada rejected the gifts presented by the embassy on the

⁸³ Ibid.

⁸⁴ Adam Clulow, *The Company and the Shogun: The Dutch Encounter with Tokugawa Japan* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2014), 51.

⁸⁵ *DNS* 12-12, CCXXI. Subsequent details also derive from this source.

advice of his father. Eventually Ieyasu's death became Hidetada's excuse for refusing to acknowledge the embassy. If the elder Tokugawa's life in power had been spent exploring every door open to him, his death served as a pretense to define the types of diplomatic and commercial relationships the shogunate could condone under his son and successor.

Though neither Philip's letters nor his envoys pleased, they did provide a rationale for another commercial voyage to the Americas. The shogunate could have granted the friars' petition to journey south to Kyushu and from there depart the islands. Instead, the shogunate kept the embassy, Date's ship, and its mixed crew under control near its base of power. Santa Catalina and his companions learned of the diplomatic pretexts masking commercial aspirations, and were told that their presence on the *Bautista* would help ensure a warm reception in New Spain.⁸⁶ The friars were but one side of the coin; the *Bautista* would also be charged with returning Date's representative to Japan.

As before Date's ship would concurrently serve the daimyo's commercial interests and the shogunate's diplomatic agenda. In an additional gesture of diplomatic goodwill, the shogunate released two imprisoned friars for the voyage back to New Spain. The idea apparently stemmed from a warning by the original triumvirate of friars that Hidetada's poor hospitality would do little to endear the Japanese to officials in New Spain. Santa Catalina's letter to the viceroy upon arriving in New Spain confirms that two additional friars made the voyage back into Spanish territory.⁸⁷ The longer Spanish missive commented that the Japanese though this gesture sufficient to merit a hospitable welcome in Acapulco, and dismissed contravening Philip's orders that no Spanish return to New Spain on a Japanese vessel. Japanese sources do

⁸⁶ DNS 12-12, CCXXI. Unless otherwise noted, details from this paragraph and the next draw on this report.

⁸⁷ DNS 12-12, CCXXXIII.

not elaborate, but the shogunate may have calculated that the return of Philip's envoys, the release of two prisoners, and the need to ferry Date's representatives back to Japan would be enough to avoid conflict, but still provide commercial opportunity.

That the *Bautista's* voyage served a commercial function is beyond dispute. The friars reported the ship bursting to the seams with cargo, and recorded a discussion with a Japanese merchant regarding transport in New Spain.⁸⁸ The friars anxiously warned of Japanese intent to drain New Spain of silver. Date's 1616 letters to secular and religious leaders dropped any talk of piety, and frankly spoke of merchants (商人, *shōnin*) filling the *Bautista* with cargo.⁸⁹ The *Date chike kiroku* (伊達治家記録, *Record of Date House Governance*) recorded that in late September the *Bautista* departed for New Spain from Sakai, an important commercial port near Kyoto.⁹⁰ Sailing from Sakai suggests that the shogunate had moved on from developing Uraga into a viable port for foreign commerce, and instead integrated the *Bautista* into existing networks. Finally, a contemporary Dutch source spoke where others were silent and reported that some portion of the cargo consisted of porcelain and lacquerware.⁹¹

The Tokugawa and Date coordinated on the *Bautista's* second voyage. Mukai Shōgen remained in contact with Date over the *Bautista* even as he took charge of Santa Catalina's party for the shogunate. Date announced to Mukai his intention to send the *Bautista* back to the Americas, and two Mukai retainers departed to aid Yokozawa and to no doubt to report on

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ Date 1616 SDS letter.

⁹⁰ Date chike kiroku. Genna 2.08.20 (1616.09.30). *SDS*, doc. 300.

⁹¹ Elbert Woutersen to the Chief of the Dutch Factory at Hirado, 1616.09.30. *SDS*, doc. 297 (Japanese translation). For a transcription of the original Dutch, see *DNS* 12-12, CCXXX.

events.⁹² The diary of a shogunate official even recorded that “Mukai Shōgen will soon send a ship [to New Spain]” without mentioning Date.⁹³ The *Tokugawa jikki* (徳川実記) aligns with Date records, stating that “Date House retainer Yokozawa Shōgen proceeded to *Nanban* from Sakai harbor on a ship (便船). [The voyage] stems from [Date’s] request.”⁹⁴ The daimyo’s 1616 letters to the Spanish note that he had carried the shogunate’s seal or license (朱印状, *shuinjō*) to send the *Bautista* to New Spain. This assertion departed from his 1613 letters referring to Ieyasu as “The Sovereign of Japan” (日本之帝王 *Nihon no teiō-sama*), but not mentioning Tokugawa credentials.⁹⁵ The tradeoff between the explicit invoking of Tokugawa authority and pious rhetoric is clear. The daimyo announced that he traveled with a Tokugawa license, but spoke in more baldly commercial and transactional terms. In sum, the daimyo’s letters to the Spanish, the tone of those letters, and the ongoing collaboration with Mukai all demonstrate the support and sanction of the Tokugawa even after Ieyasu’s passing.

The Tokugawa seal did more than sanction the *Bautista*’s second sailing; it defined the endeavor according to the shogunate’s terms. The aforementioned diary, by the Buddhist monk Ishin Sūden (以心崇伝, 1569–1633), provides glimpse from the shogunate’s perspective. The monk served Ieyasu and Hidetada as a scribe and advisor, drafting the trading licenses issued to domestic and foreign merchants. He drafted the 1614 Christian prohibition over the course of a single evening at Ieyasu’s behest.⁹⁶ A compilation of those records and Sūden’s commentary

⁹² *SDS*, doc. 300.

⁹³ *Honkō kokushi nikki*, Genna 2.06.14 (1616.07.27). *SDS*, doc. 299.

⁹⁴ *Tokugawa Jikki*, Genna 2.08.20 (1616.09.30). *SDS*, doc. 301.

⁹⁵ Date Masamune to Philip III (Draft), 1613.10.17. *SDS*, doc. 140.

⁹⁶ Screech, “Control of Christianity,” 8-9.

survive today as the *Ikoku nikki* (異国日記, *Register of Foreign Affairs*), a critical source in the study of early Tokugawa foreign relations, as does Sūden's diary *Honkō kokushi nikki* (本光國師日記, *Chronicles of Master Honkō*).⁹⁷

In late July 1616, an official asked Sūden whether *shuin* seals had ever been issued for passage to New Spain.⁹⁸ Sūden replied that while “seals for letters of correspondence” (音信之書簡之御朱印, *onshin no shokan no go-shuin*) had been sent to New Spain, he did not recall sending “travel seals.” (渡海之御朱印, *tokai no go-shuin*, lit. “seals for crossing the sea”). The monk was then charged with drafting one, as Mukai—again, Date was not mentioned—prepared to dispatch a ship to New Spain. Sūden dutifully set about his task and delivered the appropriate seal. No extant copy remains, but the scribe's template for such documents listed the date, destination, and name of the recipient.⁹⁹ Sūden's brief description of the seal he drafted for New Spain conformed to this pattern.

This episode encapsulates an important shift from 1610, as the shogunate had gone from issuing an invitation to a foreign power to producing a license to trade for a domestic actor. The need for a trade license emerged from the erosion of diplomacy. The *San Buena Ventura* had not required one in 1610. Direct outreach by the Tokugawa precluded the need for any additional sanction. Repatriating the former Governor-General Vivero offered additional diplomatic currency. In 1613, the *Bautista* departed under similar circumstances despite being Date's vessel.

⁹⁷ 影印本異国日記: 金地院崇伝外交文書集成 (東京: 東京美術, 1989). For the latter text, I rely on an excerpt from *Honkō kokushi nikki*, reproduced as *SDS*, doc. 299.

⁹⁸ Details summarized here are from *SDS*, doc. 299.

⁹⁹ Itami Somi, who traveled with Hasekura all the way to Rome, received such a pass to trade with the Philippines in 1604. See *Eiinbon Ikoku nikki: Konchiin Sūden gaikō monjo shūsei*, ed. by Nakamura Tadashi, (Tokyo: Tokyo Bijutsu, 1989), p. 192.

The ship repatriated a recognized envoy (in this instance, Sebastián Vizcaíno) who carried Tokugawa letters to the viceroy of New Spain. Date thus facilitated the shogunate's diplomacy, even as he attempted to reach farther on his own. In 1616 however, Date operated alone, at least officially. There were no Tokugawa letters to transport, and there was no *recognized* envoy to return. The *Bautista* transported Santa Catalina back to New Spain, but Hidetada had denied the group—and by extension, its sovereign—diplomatic standing. If Date wished to trade with New Spain, he would need a license to do so, just as a ship would need in order to trade in Macao, Manila, Annam, or any other port. In issuing the pass the shogunate accomplished two objectives in one stroke: it confirmed Tokugawa authority over Date for both the daimyo and the Spanish, and it denied Philip's diplomatic legitimacy. Such passes proceeded from the expectation that local authorities would treat the vessel and its crew with the respect the shogunate's sanction merited. Rather than continue an unproductive conversation with Philip, the shogunate assumed the power to open up one of the king's ports to its own ship.

Additionally, the shogunate moved from engaging with Spanish authority (even from a dominant position) to simply asserting its own at the monarchy's expense. The trade license Sūden drafted contradicted Philip's order against Japanese vessels entering Acapulco. Santa Catalina and his companions explained to their hosts that returning to New Spain on a Japanese vessel would render their lives forfeit, only to be told that the sovereign of Japan willed it, so it would be done.¹⁰⁰ Word of Philip's prohibition traveled to other foreign communities as well. Richard Cocks, the head of the English East India Company factory in Japan, reported that Philip had closed Acapulco to all Japanese well before the *Bautista* sailed back in defiance of those

¹⁰⁰ DNS 12-12, CCXXI. Here the author used “king” to refer to the Tokugawa, rather than “emperor.”

orders.¹⁰¹ When Santa Catalina returned to New Spain battered and bruised from the journey, he asked not to be punished for his disobedience, coming as it did through coercion.¹⁰²

For Hidetada the voyage was one more way to deny Philip's authority, by incorporating Acapulco, however briefly, into the constellation of ports where the shogunate's expected its prerogative to be recognized and respected. The arrival of Philip's long-awaited reply had only demonstrated to the Tokugawa that the Spanish monarch had little and less to say. Where the shogunate lacked a committed partner in Spain, it did have a willing domestic partner in Date. Hidetada and Date paid scant attention to Santa Catalina's protestations and dispatched the *Bautista* once more in pursuit of their own objectives: return the monarch's envoys (along with two more unwanted friars), retrieve Hasekura and Sotelo, and mount another commercial expedition to New Spain. By granting Date a trading pass, Hidetada ensured one more voyage to New Spain that did not require either an audience with Philip's envoys or a reply to their monarch. By now the prospect of regular voyages between Japan and the Americas must have seemed remote to all involved, but the shogunate and daimyo calculated that officials in New Spain would not harass or otherwise impede Date's vessel in New Spain. Thus, in 1616 the *Bautista* sailed with the explicit Tokugawa sanction it lacked in 1613, but those credentials assumed compliance with a Tokugawa order and left no room for conversation.

Santa Catalina and his companions reciprocated the impulse to reject further diplomatic ties. The last section of the group's report autopsied Spain's eroding relationship with the Tokugawa, and blamed tension on Japanese arrogance and low opinion of Spaniards. The author lamented that "the concept they have of us is that which we have of Indians or blacks," chafing at

¹⁰¹ Richard Cocks to John Gourney, 1615.12.16. *DNS* 12-12, CCXXVI.

¹⁰² *DNS* 12-12, CCXXXIII.

the insult to Spanish pride while oblivious to his own condescension.¹⁰³ He also noted that Hidetada's morning had not prevented him from receiving presents from the Dutch and English, and that an English pilot held Ieyasu and Hidetada's ear, a clear reference to Will Adams. Ever thorough, the same report contained a translation and analysis of Ieyasu's response to the viceroy in 1612 as evidence of the shogunate's low opinion of Spain. It concluded by cataloging the crown's economic losses in Japan, including Hideyoshi's confiscation of a vessel in 1596, the confiscation of much of the merchandise on Vivero's wrecked *San Francisco* in 1609, and even struggles by current sailors on the *Bautista* to receive fair payment for the precious few goods they had available to sell.¹⁰⁴ The report either did not recognize or ignored the commercial importance of regular trade between Japan and Manila.

To remedy Japan's mistreatment and condescension, "for reasons of religion as well as reasons of state," the author recommended prohibiting Spaniards traveling to Japan and Japanese traveling to Spanish territories. Cutting off contact would finally dispel the rumor that Christian missionaries in Japan worked to overthrow the political order. The missionary author contended that the situation could get no worse, as Christianity was prohibited throughout the country, "even in the lands of the lord who sent a mission to Spain."¹⁰⁵ In the author's view, ceasing trade would force Japan to recognize its economic dependence on Spain and bring the country to heel. Once the Japanese were cowed, Spain could dictate terms favorable to trade, missionaries, and

¹⁰³ DNS 12-12, CCXXI. Likewise for the remainder of this paragraph and the next, unless otherwise noted.

¹⁰⁴ The anonymous author noted that what the sailors had to sell was cloth, likely Spanish wool or silk textiles that had been imported into New Spain. This section of the report also includes an anecdote on the travails of a Spanish merchant based in the Philippines who was first cheated and then denied justice in a transaction involving silver.

¹⁰⁵ This was one of the few times the report mentioned Date, obliquely or otherwise.

conversion. The author predicted that a ban of “a few years” would suffice to bring about the desired change in Japan’s attitude.

The mistaken assumption that Japan needed Spain (or more precisely, the Philippines) guided this series of warnings and recommendations. The Santa Catalina embassy report was but one voice grappling with the question of how to manage Spain's relationship with Tokugawa Japan. Not everyone shared its faith that severing connections would ensure swift resolution in the monarchy’s favor. Relations with Japan also touched on "domestic" issues, namely the place of the Philippines within the Spanish empire and their relationship with powerful neighbors in East Asia. The repeated appearance of Japanese vessels in Acapulco harbor brought the issue to fore by temporarily transforming Acapulco into a port of call for a major power in Asia against Spain’s wishes. The shogunate's trans-Pacific experimentation raised the issue of who needed whom, in what capacity and to what end. This debate continued upon the *Bautista*’s return to Acapulco in early 1617, to be explored in the following chapter.

Containing and Dismissing Gentlemen from Afar

Piety cuts both ways. Where the mission attempted to use devotion and its attendant rituals as a means to negotiate concessions, Philip's councilors used the mission's stated faith to render it diplomatically inert. The king granted Hasekura leave to go Rome over the objections of his Council, but instructed his ambassador in Rome to treat the party as “foreign peoples from somewhere very far away” rather than as ambassadors empowered to settle matters of state.¹⁰⁶ The king would sponsor pilgrims, but he would not condone petitioning a separate sovereign on matters already decided.

¹⁰⁶ Consulta de Consejo de Indias, 1615.09.15. *DNS* 12-12, XCV.

The Spanish monarchy countered Sotelo and Hasekura's efforts to catch the pope's ear by getting in touch first. The king sent word ahead to the Spanish ambassador in Rome, Conde de Castro, briefing Castro on the mission's requests and the monarchy's response. Thus informed, the ambassador could advise the papacy on Spain's positions and trust the Holy Father to act accordingly. The king instructed that "in the event they propose or petition His Holiness on something of these points [concerning trade, support of the Japan mission, etc.], you are to impede them by prudent means." The instructions also noted that the group had not come "with the order of the emperor but that of the said king of Ōshū (Date)." The party's business should therefore touch on "the spiritual well-being of their souls but not on the matters of government." Pilgrimage to Rome and matters of state would not be allowed to collapse into each other as the mission had planned. The instructions in effect neutered the mission by rendering its leaders private, albeit devout, individuals, rather than accredited ambassadors.¹⁰⁷

Logistics and communication worked in the crown's favor. A letter penned in Madrid reached the ambassador three weeks later, allowing the crown to guide events more quickly, and efficiently than in the multi-year timeline inherent to communication with the Philippines. The Vatican Secret Archive today contains copies of Philip's correspondence with Ambassador Castro during this time, as well as the embassy's request to the monarch and his response.¹⁰⁸ It appears Castro forwarded or copied these letters for the Cardinal Borghese, and they remain among the latter's papers today. The cardinal, a prominent figure in the records of the embassy's

¹⁰⁷ All quotes from Philip III to Conde de Castro, 1615.09.20. *DNS* 12-12, XCVI. This letter copies much of the text and sentiment of the Council of the Indies *consulta* that month (see above).

¹⁰⁸ Manuscript copies of most sources cited in this section are split between the holdings of the *Fondo Borghese* and *Segr. Stato, Spagna*.

time in Rome, helped host the party with full knowledge of its hopes and the Spanish court's expectations.

The summary of requests and response encapsulated the monarchy's position: token support for the mission's spiritual pretensions while shelving anything requiring concerted action, especially on the issue of trade. An internal document drafted for brevity and clarity, it succinctly articulates Philip's final position on matters the Council of the Indies had debated that year, cited earlier in the chapter. I paraphrase the seven requests and their respective responses [in brackets] below:

1. Permission to go to Rome. [Granted.]
2. Creation of more bishoprics beyond those controlled by the crown of Portugal. [The matter can be reviewed once the mission returns to Japan and reports on the state of Christianity there, including numbers of converts and their location.]
3. Dispatch of as many Franciscan missionaries as possible to Japan, with Date assuming responsibility for the cost of their passage from New Spain. [Up to 20 Franciscans to be sent from the Philippines at the discretion of the Governor-General of the Philippines and the Archbishop of Manila.]
4. Funds for wine, books, clothes, medicine, altarpieces and other supplies for the mission in Ōshū. [2000 ducats granted for this purpose, the funding split between accounts in Spain and the Philippines.]
5. Provisions for a seminary and lodgings for Japanese catechists. [Denied, as there is no way of determining the cost.]
6. Permission for King of Ōshū to send ships to New Spain and trade there, and to be able to employ Spanish pilots and mariners for the trip. [Will wait to see that all in Japan agree to this in a manner the king (of Spain) can permit. As a precondition, Japan must completely cut off contact with Dutch.]
7. Supplies for trip to and return from Rome. [4000 ducats granted.]¹⁰⁹

The monarchy pushed any lasting decisions into an indefinite future, and most commitments were predicated on the embassy's return to Japan. It wanted to discourage further entanglements with the "King of Ōshū" and provide incentive for the swift departure of his embassy. An additional twenty missionaries would be sent, but from the Philippines, obviating

¹⁰⁹ "Los puntos sobre que el Japón, que estaua en esta corte..." (1615). *DNS* 12-12, LXVII.

Date's involvement in transporting them. Even that number was left to the discretion of authorities in Manila, thereby absolving the crown of any firm commitment. The monarchy required a report *from Japan* to evaluate the prospect of additional bishoprics.

Similarly, the monarchy did nothing to encourage traffic between New Spain and northeastern Japan. Trade might be considered "when all in Japan were in agreement," a hint that Philip remained unconvinced that the Tokugawa and Date were in agreement, regardless of the shogunate's known interest in commercial and technological exchange with New Spain. The injunction that all in Japan agree to trade in a manner the king might permit referenced the deteriorating state of Christianity, and doubts that Date's welcome outweighed Tokugawa hostility. Similarly, requiring the missionaries depart from the Philippines emphasized that Manila remained the accepted gateway to Japan.

The clause on trade also highlighted Dutch activities in Asia, and the complications they posed for the monarchy's commercial relationship with Japan. Although the document spoke cryptically about authorities in Japan needing to be in agreement, it unequivocally stated that expanded trade depended on the archipelago cutting all ties with the Dutch. Hirakawa Arata has summarized the impasse between Japan and Spain as one of conflicting preconditions: Japan making trade a precondition to tolerating missionaries, Spain making the tolerance of missionaries a precondition to trade.¹¹⁰ The Spanish monarchy's stance here states a further precondition regarding the Dutch, a consistent demand over the course of its patchwork negotiations with the Tokugawa and its handling of Date's mission. Vivero tried to make Dutch expulsion a condition of bringing miners over from New Spain when negotiating with the

¹¹⁰ Hirakawa Arata, "Supein no tainichi senryaku to Ieyasu, Masamune no gaikō," *Kokushi danwakai zasshi* 50 (March 31, 2010): 193–209.

shogunate in 1609. Four years later Sotelo argued for the carrot over the stick, writing that stronger commercial relations with Spain would build goodwill with the Tokugawa and check Dutch advances in the area. Neither man successfully lobbied the Spanish court, but the monarchy and its subject all agreed on the Dutch threat even if their responses differed.

Philip had the Dutch on his mind when he permitted the mission's journey to Rome. Writing to overrule his Council earlier in the year, the king noted that "among the other positive effects that could be obtained [from the mission traveling to Rome] is that the heretics see that when they do not heed the pope, [others] come from great distances to prostrate themselves at his feet."¹¹¹ In 1615, the most problematic "heretics" were the Dutch, and the king's note closed by stating that trade between Japan and New Spain required their expulsion. The same language resurfaced in the memorial above. Philip also assigned symbolic importance to having Hasekura in Rome, a venture requiring little follow-up outside of Europe. The king granted only 2000 ducats to provision of the mission in Date's domain, but allotted the full 4000 ducats requested by Sotelo for the trip to Rome. Thus the monarchy committed twice the amount of resources to sending Hasekura to Rome than it did to provisioning the religious mission in northeastern Japan, on whose behalf Date had nominally sent his retainer in the first place.

Following the party's grand entrance and cheery reception in Rome, in January 1616 the papacy issued its own response to Sotelo and Hasekura's lobbying. The Spanish monarchy's advance outreach proved effective, as the pontiff aligned with or deferred to the Catholic King on the core issues. Paul V agreed that appointing a new bishop required further deliberation, and could not be decided before Date's mission returned. He reached this decision in consultation

¹¹¹ Consulta del Consejo de Indias, 1615.04.02. *DNS* 12-12, LXVI. The quote comes Philip's signed response to this *consulta*.

with the Holy Congregation, an advisory organ of the papacy. The body sympathized with the need for additional bishops to oversee Japan's Christian community but tabled the issue, citing the need for more information on the state of affairs in Japan, the lack of any request from Spain for a new bishop, and Sotelo's own reports of persecution. On trade, the pontiff offered to bounce the party's request back to Spain. Dispatching additional missionaries to Japan also required coordination with the Spanish crown, as any missionaries would depart from Spanish territory. The papacy advised its *nuncio* in Madrid of these decisions, ensuring that nothing would be done without the consultation or approval of the Spanish monarchy. As Philip had already staked out his position, any remaining hope of ships, goods, and missionaries traveling regularly between New Spain and Date's domain dissipated.¹¹²

Paul V also proved ambivalent towards the embassy's requests for favor more clearly within the pontiff's sole prerogative. The group had not been shy, and their petitions went far beyond the seven articles the Spanish court summarized for the papacy cited above. The party asked that Date be granted the blessed sword and hat, regalia presented to Catholic monarchs in recognition of their defense of the faith. It requested the pope to grant Date permission to found a holy order of knights. Echoing their earlier request to Philip that Hasekura be inducted into the order of Santiago, here the mission requested Hasekura and his descendants be granted knighthood and noble investiture by the papacy as counts palatine (*Conte Palatino*). Other requests made by those associated with the party included naming an archbishop for Japan, providing a pension for the mission's scribe Scipione Amati, and sainthood for the martyrs in Japan. The pope refused to honor Date as a Catholic king, citing the obvious fact that he had yet to convert. Paul V reluctantly agreed to invest Hasekura as requested, but would do so in a

¹¹² DNS 12-12, CXLVIII. In Japanese translation, see *SDS*, doc. 234.

private ceremony.¹¹³ Finally, he refused Amati his pension, ruled that Japan needed more bishops before it could have an archbishop, and declared that the canonization of martyrs could be investigated if the missionaries of Japan desired it.¹¹⁴

These disparate favors and the response to them demonstrate the limits of Sotelo's strategy to secure concessions through piety. It is difficult to believe that all of these varied petitions—notably investing Date as a Catholic monarch and protector of the faith—were made with the expectation that they would be granted. Sotelo sought to engage with the authority of the pope and the king on as many planes as possible in order to establish connections that might translate into concrete material support. But his interlocutors would only go so far. Paul and Philip were amenable to receiving or bearing witness to Hasekura's personal acts of faith and humbling himself—and by extension, his mysterious lord—before the established religious-political order in Catholic Europe. They were also pleased to receive a visitor from so far away, especially one professing love for the Catholic God at a time when Europe remained wracked by religious tension. Philip witnessed Hasekura's baptism and hosted the party in Madrid, even though the king harbored little interest in treating with the "king" who sent them. Philip's policy here reflected Varte's (the head of the *Casa de Contratación*) advice to receive the embassy as a means to burnish the glory of the monarchy. In turn Paul V honored the "ambassador from Japan" with entrances and audiences, and the senate invested him as a citizen of the Eternal City.

Nevertheless, both Catholic sovereigns balked at the idea of honoring the mission or its patron in ways that integrated Hasekura or Date into meaningful institutional structures. Hence

¹¹³ Ibid. The Italian reads (maintaining the orthography of the *DNS* volume): "Alle dimande dell'Ambasciatore Laico [Hasekura]; che sie creato familiar, Conte Palatino, e caualiere esso, e suoi descendenti, e se bene non è solito se li concede l'oratorio priuato."

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

Philip rejecting out of hand Hasekura's membership in the Order of Santiago, and the pope's refusal of the blessed cap and hat, among other honors. They would sponsor the pilgrim, and even host the ambassador, but they would not bind themselves to a polity half a world away, whose power, sovereignty, and motivations remained contested and ambiguous. Hasekura's professed faith in God could not overcome Philip's lack of faith in Date.

Date never obtained the requisite political or spiritual credentials to satisfy the Catholic King and the Holy Father despite the embassy's willing participation in political and religious theater. In Rome, the embassy could never get around Date's unrealized conversion. The pope wrote a reply to Date in December 1615 that was suitably grandiose and good-willed, but also discussed Date's spiritual life, enjoining the daimyo to build a Christian kingdom and to convert.¹¹⁵ Hasekura's faith could not stand in fully as a proxy for Date's potential faith. Although the pope gave Hasekura a warm welcome, he did not celebrate mass with the embassy, again on account of the (lack of) faith of its patron.¹¹⁶ The pontiff imposed some distance, deferring to Spain on secular matters and denying Date the honors reserved for Catholic monarchs even as he welcomed the daimyo's retainer.

For Philip, the daimyo was never quite sovereign enough, one of many kings in a land ruled by an "emperor." This subordinate status automatically disqualified his representatives from establishing commercial relations. Spain recognized Date's domain of "Voxu" as a kingdom subject to the paramount leadership of the Tokugawa, just as the Spanish monarchy ruled a

¹¹⁵ Pope Paul V to Date Masamune, 1615.12.27. *DNS* 12-12, CL. See also *SDS*, doc. 236.

¹¹⁶ Ganoi, *Hasekura*, 148–49.

composite conglomeration of "kingdoms" in Europe and the Indies.¹¹⁷ The events of the Keichō Embassy demonstrate just how vigorously the crown attempted to regulate trade among its kingdoms. New Spain was not permitted to decide its own foreign trade policy, for example. Extending this logic outward, negotiating trade with Date without the express approval of the Tokugawa was a non-starter, the equivalent of allowing the viceroalties of Peru or New Spain the leeway to decide Spain's trade policy with Ming China.

The politics of piety in Spain and Italy did not solve the embassy's problems. It is unlikely that even a fervently Catholic "king" from northern Japan could have secured the support and concessions Date pursued. Accusations that Date sought trade more than God landed with too much authority, and Sotelo's claims that the daimyo would provide for lay Christians and missionaries landed with all too little. Date could not be dismissed, but neither could he be treated as an equal partner or sovereign servant of the Lord.

The Keichō Embassy departed Rome in January 1616 aware that ceremony had not translated into results. Sotelo's letters to Philip on the return voyage from Italy spoke in glowing terms of their reception in Rome, but the Spanish ambassador painted a different picture. Castro reported that although the group had accorded itself well "the friar" (Sotelo) was not satisfied with the results of its petitions.¹¹⁸ Nor were the king's councils satisfied with the friar's conduct when they learned of his attempts to involve the pope on issues Philip had already decided. The Council of the Indies recommended that the superiors in the Franciscan order reprimand him for

¹¹⁷ "Kingdoms" (*reinos*) was the term favored by the monarchy for areas we now commonly refer to as colonies. Even in Europe, Spain was a composite of kingdoms: Castile, Leon, Aragon, Portugal, etc. Many of these had their own viceroys, serving as the template for the viceroalties in the Americas.

¹¹⁸ Conde de Castro to Philip III, 1616.01.09. *DNS* 12-12, CLVIII.

working against the crown's interests.¹¹⁹ Both Indies and State wanted to send the mission back to Japan as quickly as possible—as had been their desire a year prior, but Sotelo and Hasekura were in no hurry to return empty-handed. Indies expected them gone on the summer 1616 *flota* to the Americas. A large portion of the party left, but the principals remained in the outskirts of Seville. Sotelo and Hasekura claimed that the latter had fallen ill, while reiterating their wish to obtain a formal letter from Philip to Date. The newfound frailty of both men continued when Sotelo broke his leg in spring 1617, and petitioned to remain in Europe yet another year to no avail.¹²⁰ Having put off a return in 1615 and 1616, the group finally sailed for New Spain in summer 1617.¹²¹ By this time, the Council of the Indies had ordered officials in no uncertain terms to get Hasekura on a boat, whether Sotelo accompanied him or not.¹²²

During this second, frostier tenure in Spain the mission's rhetorical strategy reverted back to political punditry, but this time by abandoning the Tokugawa shogunate rather than by drawing on its credibility. Faith still mattered, but now a larger, direr story of Christianity under siege came to outweigh rhetorically the narrative of the personal submission and conversion of one Japanese retainer. The news from the archipelago trickling into Spain in 1616 and 1617 accounted for this strategic shift. The prohibition of Christianity and fall of Osaka occurred while the Keichō Embassy was abroad, and Sotelo futilely tried to spin these events in the mission's

¹¹⁹ Consulta del Consejo de Indias, 1616.04.16. *DNS* 12-12, CLXXVIII.

¹²⁰ For Hasekura's illness, Consulta del Consejo de Indias, 1616.08.27. *DNS* 12-12, CLXXXIII. For Sotelo's leg, Sotelo to Philip III, 1617.04.20. *DNS* 12-12, CXC. Hasekura had earlier fallen ill on the return voyage from Rome, necessitating a stop in Genoa. Sotelo wrote the monarchy with news, and a request for more funds. See Sotelo to Philip III, 1616.02.08. *DNS* 12-12, CLXXIV.

¹²¹ For the request to delay again, see Memorial of Father Sotelo and Hasekura (1617), *DNS* 12-12, CXCVII. Gonoï writes that the group departed in July 1617. See Gonoï, *Hasekura*, 202. All but a half-dozen or so of the party left on the 1616 *flota*. The decision reduced expenses, a necessity now that the group no longer received a royal stipend. Barred from Madrid, Sotelo and Hasekura spent their last year in a Franciscan monastery just outside of Seville.

¹²² Consulta del Consejo de Indias, 1617.06.16. *DNS* 12-12, CXCVI.

favor.¹²³ Sotelo's missives and Hasekura's translated letters reported that Ōshū had become a haven for the archipelago's Christian community, and that Date stood as the lone lord still welcoming of the faith.¹²⁴ But the flock needed shepherds, and with the rest of Japan now hostile territory, the only way to dispatch missionaries was via the direct ocean route between Date's "kingdom" and New Spain. These last desperate memorials explicitly tied the success of Date's mission to the future of the Catholic mission in Japan.

The pair's urgency fell on deaf ears in the Spanish monarchy's councils, which had learned to flavor Sotelo's words liberally with salt. By now the duo was nearly four years removed from being in Japan during a tumultuous time for Spanish interests in the archipelago, to say nothing of the embassy's obvious partisanship. For the monarchy, escalated hostility and the expulsion of missionaries reaffirmed the need to move with caution rather than exposing New Spain directly to the vicissitudes of the Japanese political mood as it was imprecisely understood in Madrid.

In almost three years in Europe, Date's mission tried to graft itself to the sovereignty of the Tokugawa, the authority of God, and the potential of Japan's would-be Christian king. None had proved viable. In 1617, the embassy did finally receive a formal response from Philip III addressed to Date. Even this was a concession. The monarchy had actually drafted the letter in 1616, but intended to relinquish it to the party only in the Philippines as an additional impetus for the group to leave. Instead Sotelo and Hasekura had used the lack of a letter as an excuse to stay. Meant as a sop to the party and its sponsor, the letter was friendly but its contents were short and

¹²³ Ieyasu passed away during this time, but it does not appear that this news reached the embassy before it departed Europe. Sotelo and Hasekura would later comment on this development from New Spain. See Chapter 4.

¹²⁴ *DNS* 12-12, CXC (cited above); Hasekura to the Philip III. *DNS* 12-12, CXCI. The latter is in Spanish, undoubtedly written with Sotelo's considerable aid and input.

empty relative to group's original expectations. The king spoke of his pleasure in receiving Hasekura and thanked Date for the kindness he offered Philip's vassals, but flicked away Date's requests for missionaries, mariners, and trade. The party had their letter, but when they left that summer their boons remained firmly in the realm of the spiritual and symbolic, their submission having been met with thanks, but not support.

The empty letter was the product of a harsh internal autopsy. Both documents were authored by the President of the Council of the Indies, and former viceroy of New Spain, the Marqués de Salinas. The monarchy had asked Salinas to advise it on the merits of replying to Date with a formal letter and granting the embassy money to purchase gifts for their sponsor. Salinas responded that they could have their letter, but that the monarchy need not devote any more funds to mission, “for [Spain] has amply fulfilled [any financial obligation] to this Japanese without having any duty to him [aside from his] being a stranger come from somewhere very [far] away.” The council President went on, listing the incurred expenses already devoted to a group “whose coming has been with such little foundation and of so little importance.” Salinas had downgraded Hasekura from an ambassador to simply “this Japanese,” and defined the entire mission as a frivolous and expensive waste of resources.¹²⁵

Salinas was both right and wrong. Neither the embassy nor its hosts were satisfied. The former failed to secure any part of its core mandate, and the latter resented the imposition of hosting and sponsoring a Japanese embassy without the clear sanction of the ruler of the Japan. But the monarchy had made of a point of denying the embassy any real status. Furthermore, as an event, the embassy had spurred substantive developments vis-à-vis the Spanish monarchy's

¹²⁵ Consulta del Consejo de Indias, 1616.06.04. *DNS* 12-12, CLXXX. The monarchy's request in turn stemmed from memorials from the embassy on these points.

policy toward Tokugawa Japan. The Keichō embassy had clarified the conceptual distance and priority differences between the apex authorities of the two polities. Finally, the king and the pope readily used the spectacle of “this Japanese” to asset the appeal of their faith and their own roles as the secular and spiritual stewards of that faith. Paul V incorporated the embassy into a fresco cycle commemorating other recent visitors and figures from afar—Persia and Kongo among them—as part of the pope’s vision for a global church.¹²⁶

Philip III’s vision was also global, and the Habsburg king perhaps engaged with and attempted to rule over more locales than any other monarch to that point in world history. Yet the deliberations over, response to, and ultimate dismissal of the Keichō Embassy reveal just how circumscribed and delineated Spain’s expansionist vision could be in practice. So the monarch supported the ceremonies that reinforced the Catholic faith and colonial rule, but demurred from the outreach premised on partnership, or at least equivalence, across the Pacific Ocean. A similar, if more overtly hostile, dynamic played out in Japan as the Tokugawa rejected an embassy that asked too much, offered too little, and represented potential threat to the shogunate’s own sense of control.

Salinas’ judgments and Philip’s orders aside, there remained the practical matter of shutting down the Japanese trade. Even as Ieyasu’s heir spurned Philip’s gifts, he authorized the *Bautista* to venture unbidden to Acapulco once more. Once back in the Americas, the vessel would reveal the tensions inherent to a composite empire stretched across the globe. Salinas’ replacement as viceroy would look to thread a needle, shutting down Japan’s route to New Spain without damaging the commercial livelihood of the Philippines. In dealing with the *Bautista*,

¹²⁶ See Fujikawa, “Pope Paul V’s Global Design,” (2016).

officials in Acapulco and Mexico would attempt to define Japanese-Spanish relations on both sides of the Pacific, with decidedly mixed results.

4. The Gate Ajar

The *San Juan Bautista* set out on its second and final voyage from Japan to New Spain early in the fall of 1616, departing Uraga on 30 September. It was the fourth attempt to send a ship from Japan to the Americas in six years, and would be the third successful crossing. Date Masamune tasked his vessel with retrieving Hasekura and Sotelo, but also loaded down the 500-ton galleon with cargo. The vessel's appearance was yet another disruption and potential threat to Spanish control over its goods, its subjects, and the networks connecting them.

In countering that threat, representatives from Manila, Mexico, and Madrid engaged in a Pacific calculus aimed at rebuffing Japanese expansion with minimal disruption to the monarchy's existing intra-colonial trade. At the center of this stood Viceroy of New Spain and Marqués de Guadalcázar, Diego Fernández de Córdoba (hereafter Guadalcázar). The viceroy received orders from his sovereign across one ocean, and heard petitions from an official who had crossed the other, and the two were not always in agreement.

The *Bautista*'s return spurred an *ad hoc* policy of obstruction mixed with concessions, meant to discourage further commerce without unduly antagonizing its sponsors. This required a delicate balance, resisting but not refusing requests to expand the commercial relations of New Spain, while working to protect the economic life of the Philippines and the islands' relationship to its powerful Japanese neighbor. The tension between Japanese and Spanish interests, as well the tension among differing nodes of the monarchy's overseas empire, came to the forefront on the issue of customs. However, even as he granted the Japanese a tax break, Guadalcázar looked to ensure no other Japanese vessel would follow in the *Bautista*'s wake.

This chapter explores the concrete measures adopted by Spanish officials to rid themselves of the *Bautista* and the Japanese incursion it represented. The vessel remained in

New Spain over a year, during which time officials debated what could be traded, whether or not it could be taxed, the makeup of the *Baustista*'s crew, the ship's final destination, and its ownership. Hasekura and Sotelo joined the proceedings from fall 1617, and pursued yet another round of petition in an atmosphere of distrust. In this last gambit to solicit on Date's behalf, and in response to Ieyasu's death, the embassy completely abandoned any appeal to Tokugawa authority. Philip III weighed in at a distance, only able to do so once while the *Bautista* anchored in Acapulco. This left Guadalcázar in charge of deciding the response to the vessel on the ground. He did so with the input of a representative of Spanish Manila, who took the side of the Japanese party in lobbying against levying customs on Date's ship.

I contextualize these events within the ongoing debate on the Philippines' role in Spanish Asia and the Spanish empire, two interrelated but distinct spheres. The Spanish Habsburgs controlled the viceroyalties of New Spain and Peru, the Philippines, and Macau, and memorials from all of these locations weighed in on how to structure their relations with one another and organize their interactions with Asia polities, particularly China and Japan. Debate on these issues would continue long after the *Bautista* sailed away, but Spain committed itself to maintenance of the *status quo*, leaving the Philippines as the only destination for American silver and the primary Spanish outpost permitted to trade with Asia. The monarchy's agents in the Pacific would then struggle to apply this *status quo* to Japan, whose leadership showed little interest in adhering to Spain's vision.

The *Bautista* arrived laden with contradictions. The ship carried Date's friendly letters, announcing gifts, and requesting commerce, pilots, and sailors. Yet the vessel counted among its cargo Philip's own gifts, rejected by the Tokugawa shogunate, and numbered among its passengers the monarch's representatives, who reported a cold reception and poor treatment at

the hands of their hosts in Japan. The *Bautista* carried the expressed good intentions of a regional leader, yet brought proof of the increased hostility of the archipelago's central authority. The mixed messages presented by the *Bautista* did little to assuage this concern, and again raised questions of who exactly he represented and how much his benefactor could be trusted.

The *Bautista*'s second anchoring in Acapulco, the third arrival of a Japanese ship to a port in New Spain that decade, brought these concerns to a head. In the course of deciding how best to handle the ship's return, king and viceroy together adopted policies that restricted the flow of silver, the movement of subjects, and access to ports. A similar program of constrictive policies carried out by the Tokugawa in the ensuing decades have laid the foundation for a narrative of Japanese insularity; the *Bautista*'s sojourn in New Spain encourages us to question the typically unilateral character of this assignation.

Contrasting Visions for the Philippines, 1610–1620

The Philippines presented a persistent challenge to the logistical capacity and authority of the Spanish empire. Since 1565 the Spanish settlement in the islands—principally on the northern island of Luzon—connected American silver to the silks sold by the Chinese merchant diaspora. The islands also served as a way-point for Japanese merchants, who had their own supply of silver to exchange for Chinese silks. Trade grew steadily, and thousands of Chinese were active in and around Manila in the seventeenth century.¹ The silver, however, came but once a year from the Americas. The “Manila Galleons,” or China Ships, as they were fittingly called in Spanish America, developed an annual rhythm. Ships departed Acapulco in early spring, sailing westward just north of the equator. They would arrive in the Philippines three or four months later. The eastern crossing out of Manila was usually attempted in late June or July,

¹ William Lytle Schurz, *The Manila Galleon* (New York: E.P. Dutton, 1939), 80–81.

during the summer monsoon. To sail east, the returning ship first ventured north, eventually riding the Kuroshio Current along Japan's Pacific coast before turning east at between thirty to forty degrees latitude. The ships turned south once they sighted the coast of New Spain (often present-day California) and arrived in Acapulco up to half a year after their departure.² This silver thread stretched taunt over the ocean granted the Spanish Philippines access to Asian trade, but the islands remained dependent on the good graces of their powerful neighbors and the uneven trickle of men, material, and provisions dispatched by the court and the Viceroyalty of New Spain.

Despite keen demand in America for the silks and other goods brought back to Acapulco each year, the length of the voyage, the dangers involved, and most importantly, the monarchy's desire to maintain control of the trade, limited the volume of Spanish traffic. Both Philip II (r. 1556–1598) and his son and successor Philip III (r. 1598–1621) attempted to control commerce between New Spain and its dependency across the waters. Their regulations are recorded in the *Recopilación de Leyes de las Indias*, compiled in the late seventeenth century.³ The elder Philip's edicts date to the early 1590s. In 1591 he forbade every American territory outside of New Spain (i.e. Peru, Tierrafirme, Guatemala) from trade with either the Philippines or China.⁴ He restricted the volume of trade in 1593, ordering that goods shipped from the Philippines not exceed 250,000 pesos and limited the principal and profit that could be sent back to the islands to

² Schurz, *The Manila Galleon*, chaps. 6 (216–250) and 7 (251–283), describes the route and its vicissitudes in detail.

³ The *Recopilacion* was published in 1680, and spans two hundred and eighteen chapters across nine volumes. All laws cited here are from chapter forty-five of the ninth volume, "De la navegacion, y comercio de las Islas Filipinas, Chinas, Nueva, España, y Perú." Here I note the law number in parentheses. Blair and Robertson provide an English translation in volume XVII of *The Philippines Islands*.

⁴ The Philippine Islands were administered as part of the Viceroyalty of New Spain. However, Spanish sources often spoke of commerce and trade between "Nueva Espana" and "Las Filipinas," and I follow that usage here.

500,000 (Law VI). The crown consistently sought to curtail the flow of precious metals out of New Spain, decreeing the same year that no more than half of the 500,000-peso allotment be sent as "tipusque" (a coin of gold mixed with copper), and less than a third sent back in gold. Philip II also set the number of annual vessels to two ships with no more than 300 tons of capacity each, with a third ship held in reserve. Furthermore, no goods from the Philippines, especially Chinese silk, were permitted in any other part of the Indies, though they were allowed in peninsular Spain (Law XV).

Philip III reissued the edicts of his father and added his own a decade later. In 1604, he ordered officials in Acapulco to keep a strict account of everything sent to the Philippines (Law XVI), while all goods arriving from the islands were to be inspected by the official treasury there and again in Mexico (Law LX). In order to avoid the undue loss of ships to storm or enemy, vessels were not be loaded beyond their intended capacity (Law XVII). The king issued multiple decrees forbidding the buying and selling of Chinese cloth in Peru specifically, outlining the punishments for transgressors and ordering that an auditor of the viceroyalty ensure enforcement (Law LXIX & LXXVI). In an example of micro-managing *par excellence*, Philip ordered that each sailor take no more clothes than were absolutely necessary for the voyage (Law LII).

These restrictions on the number and size of ships, the type and quantity of cargo, and the flow of Chinese textiles suggest the crown's porous control over the trade between the Philippines and the Americas at the turn of the seventeenth century. Smuggling was rampant. Given its clandestine nature, the volume of illicit trade can only be estimated, but the persistence of laws censuring the practice suggests an ongoing problem and consistent official concern.⁵ The

⁵ John J. Tepaske put the amount of illicit trade at roughly ten times the legal volume around the turn of the seventeenth century, equating to about 128,000 kg per annum. See Tepaske, "New World Silver, Castile and the

contraband trade in Chinese silks smuggled from New Spain south to Peru was so bad that by 1636 Philip IV (r. 1621–1665) had issued a full ban on all commerce between the Viceroyalties of Peru and New Spain to staunch the flow (Law LXXVIII).⁶ The declared guidelines for the size of the galleons were also a far cry from reality. Philip III reissued his father's decree limiting each vessel to three hundred tons in 1604, but in the early 1600s the galleons displaced 1,000 tons, with some climbing up to 2,000.⁷

The arrival of Japanese vessels and the implications of trade between the archipelago and New Spain become clearer in this context. The first ship from Japan, the *San Buena Ventura*, arrived in Acapulco on October 27th, 1610. It returned the former governor-general of the Philippines Don Rodrigo de Vivero, who had shipwrecked in Japan in 1609 on his way back from the Philippines. The 120-ton *Buena Ventura* also carried a party of twenty-three Japanese merchants, some from around Kyoto.⁸ Date sponsored construction of the *Bautista* three years later together with help from stranded Spaniards and input from Tokugawa representatives. The vessel displaced roughly 500 tons, and departed Date's domain of Ōshū in northeastern Honshu in late October of 1613. It transported one hundred and eighty passengers, including Date's ambassadorial legation, Spanish sailors, and once again, a contingent of Japanese merchants.⁹

Philippines, 1590-1800," in *Precious Metals in the Later Medieval and Early Modern Worlds*, edited by John Richards (Durham: Carolina Academic Press, 1983), 435-6.

⁶ Notation in the margins gives five ratification dates between 1604 and 1636. As Blair and Roberston point out, the final text of the prohibition mentions Viceroy Luis Jerónimo de Cabrera, who did not assume his post until 1629. The law was thus amended over time, though something like a full prohibition may have existed earlier.

⁷ Schurz, *Manila Galleon*, 194.

⁸ For the *Buena Ventura*'s voyage, see Takashi Gono, *Hasekura Tsunenaga* (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kobunkan, 2003), 32.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 52-55.

After completing its initial roundtrip, Date sent the ship to Acapulco a second time in 1616, again laden with a mix of merchants, sailors, and cargo.

All told, a Japanese vessel had arrived three times in the span of seven years at the empire's single American gateway to the commerce of East Asia, on the same cyclical route the Spanish themselves sailed but once a year. The second ship quadrupled the capacity of the first, and by itself represented roughly eighty percent of the cargo space permitted by the king's own decree a decade ago, lax enforcement notwithstanding. The vessels came and went from a place well beyond the control of Spanish authorities, struggling to rein in (or illicitly take advantage of) the trade between two nodes of their own empire. Furthermore, the *Bautista* sailed from a land with a reputation for aggression and, increasingly, persecution. The Tokugawa had also recently permitted the rebel Dutch to establish a factory in its territory, which served as another base from which to harass Manila.¹⁰

An ongoing discussion regarding the economic role of the Philippines ran parallel to official efforts to regulate trade by decree, with some questioning whether or not the Pacific trade should be allowed to continue. The king both solicited opinions and received memorials drafted independently. This debate continued throughout the second decade of the seventeenth century, while actors across the empire attempted to sort out their relationship with Japan. The perceived problems and proposed solutions varied, though most proposals proceeded from the assumption that the silver foundation of the China Ships required remedy. Three voices lending themselves to the discussion during the 1610s were a Dominican, an anonymous advisor, and the viceroy of Peru.

¹⁰ The Dutch factory was established in Hirado in southwestern Kyushu in 1609. See Adam Cluow, *The Company and the Shogun: The Dutch Encounter with Tokugawa Japan* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2014).

Writing from Manila in 1619, the Dominican Diego Audarte presented a plan to staunch the outflow of silver from New Spain but secure the Philippines' role as a mediator in the trade between China and Japan, recognizing that "the inhabitants of the said islands [the Philippines] have no other means of support than commerce."¹¹ He advocated the cessation of the galleon trade in favor of increased commerce with Japan, and the abandonment of the Portuguese settlement at Macao.¹² The former would ensure a silver supply for the trade keeping the Philippines viable, while the latter would eliminate one of Manila's competitors in the profitable enterprise of mediating the trade between East Asia's largest two economies. Audarte claimed his proposal would keep a greater proportion of American silver under Spanish control, though he did not discuss the risks of making a Spanish holding completely dependent on Chinese silk and Japanese silver.

He did however discuss the benefits of deeper ties to Japanese silver, to crown, church, and colony. Foremost among them were the economic and security advantages presented by closer ties to Japan. The voyage from Manila to the ports of the archipelago was shorter and over safer waters than that to New Spain, providing a more reliable return on commercial investments. Existing trade with Japan could also grow, for it was not subject to the 500,000 peso limit imposed by the king. Deeper commercial ties would strengthen security, making an ally of the people "who are more feared in the [Philippine] islands than all the other neighboring nations, for they are very courageous and arrogant."¹³ The Dominican suggested the Japanese might aid

¹¹ Emma Blair and James Alexander Robertson, eds., vol. XVII of *The Philippine Islands 1493–1803* (Cleveland: A.H. Clark Company, 1903), 194. Hereafter abbreviated B&R XVII. The paragraphs below use the entire letter, 194-203.

¹² The Portuguese and Spanish crowns were united under Habsburg rule from 1580–1640, but their colonies were administered separately and considered distinct kingdoms, as these proposals make clear.

¹³ B&R, XVIII, 195.

Spain in opposing Dutch sea power, despite the rebels' factory in the archipelago. Though Audarte allowed that two small ships from New Spain could continue to supply the Philippines with soldiers and goods from the West Indies (absent silver), the core of his proposal replaced the China Ships with the goodwill and silver of Japan. In lieu of a long, perilous journey, costly to the treasury, he recommended a closer market not reliant on crown resources to function, where increased commerce might invite increased security.

Audarte also provided ready answers to any who might balk at the suggestion to abandon Macao. He dismissed the settlement's commercial importance and questioned its political loyalties and spiritual example. The author alleged that the town was loyal to the Chinese emperor rather than the Habsburg crown, and brought no revenues to the empire. The trade it did carry out could be handled by ships directly out of Goa, which the Chinese would receive without hesitation. He claimed that the Portuguese had already lost the Indies to the Dutch, and that the will and means to fight the rebels resided more in the Philippines than Macao. Finally, the missionary charged the lax morals of Macao's inhabitants with hindering the Christian mission in China. Missionaries could instead be sent from the Philippines to bolster evangelical efforts on the Chinese mainland. All the king need do to ensure the desertion of Macao was order that only silks from Manila could be sold to Japan, thereby robbing Macao of its market and causing its inhabitants to leave of their own accord.

An unsigned letter from around 1617 presented a very different remedy to the same problem.¹⁴ Where Aduarte discarded Macao, this anonymous author claimed that the constant flow of goods from China, Japan, and the Indian subcontinent through the settlement generated a stream of customs duties for the crown. In contrast, Asian trade through the Philippines relied

¹⁴ Found in vol. XVIII of *The Philippines Islands*, 57-64. The editors suggest its author was an advisor to the king.

disproportionately on the simple exchange of silk for silver, providing fewer opportunities to fill royal coffers with customs revenue. The author pointedly dismissed trade between Japan and the Americas as untenable, as each participated in the market as silver suppliers. He thereby proposed removing the Philippines from the Asian market entirely, ceding its share to the more favorable trade out of Macao. Consolidation through Macao would give the Portuguese a stronger bargaining position in their trade with Japan, by denying Japanese traders an alternative market for the purchase of Chinese silks.¹⁵ It would also put an end to Iberian in-fighting, damaging to the reputation and profits of Portuguese and Spaniards alike. The anonymous author suggested that the Philippines survive by exporting to New Spain the gold rumored to exist on the islands in exchange for necessary provisions. In sum, he proposed replacing an outflow of silver with an influx of gold, but the lack of gold deposits in the islands made the proposal untenable.¹⁶

In contrast to these voices advocating radical change to the galleon trade, Juan de Mendoza, Marques de Montesclaros and Viceroy of Peru, defended the existing trade between the Philippines and New Spain in a memorial to the king in 1612. The crown solicited his opinion following a petition by the merchants of Seville to open direct trade between Spain and the Philippines and discontinue the Manila galleons as a means of staunching the silver drain west out of New Spain. The Marques was uniquely positioned to weigh the merits of the merchants' proposal from the perspective of Spanish America, having served as the viceroy of New Spain from 1603–1607 before becoming the viceroy of Peru (1607–1615). Montesclaros

¹⁵ At this time there was no officially sanctioned direct trade between China and Japan.

¹⁶ The Spanish pursued rumors of gold deposits on the islands in the 1610s and 1620s, but met with little success.

rejected the wisdom of the Iberian merchants' proposal, drawing on a holistic perspective of the empire's internal dynamics and external relationships.

The viceroy adhered to a model of enforced dependence as the proper administrative model for Spain's composite empire. Montesclaros summarized his thought early in the memorial:

It is recognized, Sire, that the chief means of keeping these kingdoms tranquil is to make them dependencies of España, in what pertains not only to distributive and commutative justice, but also to whatever else is necessary for the preservation of life, in the spiritual as well as the temporal...[however] it would [not] be excusable to molest and vex the subjects with what is not actually necessary, if the above purpose could be attained at less cost and vexation to them."¹⁷

This framework of enforced but benevolent dependence grounded Mendoza's defense of the Pacific trade as it then stood. He presented and dismissed in turn two commonly cited advantages to direct trade between Spain and the Philippines. The first argued that cutting off New Spain's trade with the Philippines would make it completely dependent on Spain proper, ostensibly in line with the Marques' own thought regarding dependence. This derived from the merchants' warning that trade between Spain and the West Indies had decreased in recent years, a threat to the crown's control over its colonies. Mendoza maintained that while profits had fallen, the volume of trade had not. Rather, the higher margins of earlier times had fallen victim to the growth in trade and greater competition. The Marques pointed out that New Spain's principal

¹⁷ B&R XVII, 214-5. The full text of the letter is found on pages 213–232.

imports from Spain and the Philippines were different, receiving wine, oil, and linen from the former and silks from the latter. Thus commerce with the Philippines did not threaten New Spain's economic ties to Iberia. The viceroy also dismissed the argument that direct commerce with the Philippines would be a boon to Spain. Iberia possessed few goods in demand in East Asia, and direct trade between Spain and the Philippines would result in an outflow of silver directly from the center of the empire, "where the harm would be greater."¹⁸ The Marques concluded that the cessation of trade would injure New Spain, and in his estimation, doom the Philippines.

Montesclaros' grim prognosis for the Philippines derived from the vulnerability of the Spanish settlement, surrounded by larger, potentially aggressive polities, and harassed by Dutch naval forces. He described Japan and China as "powerful" foes, "one because of its strength and valor [Japan], and the other because of its incredible multitude of inhabitants [China]."¹⁹ These foes tolerated the Philippines because the islands served as a gateway to trade with the kingdoms of Spain. Severing the Philippines from New Spain would remove the islands' *raison d'etre*, a frank acknowledgement that the islands depended on the good graces of their formidable neighbors, regardless of the Marques' emphasis on maintaining dependence on Spain. Montesclaros' admission embodied his ambivalence toward both China and Japan, prevalent throughout his letter. He referred to both indirectly and directly as "enemies" multiple times, yet the Marques rejected similar claims levied by the merchants of Seville against China, writing that "it is a fact that the Chinese do us no other harm than to keep the silver [from New Spain]."²⁰

¹⁸ *ibid.*, 222-3.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 230.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 218-9.

He described the Japanese in more bellicose terms, but trade between the archipelago and Manila was "open and permitted to all who wish it."²¹ Iberian traders' calls for direct trade between Spain and Asia's two largest markets, beyond threatening the security of the Philippines, were not commercially viable. Spanish cloth would make no inroads in Asia, while imports of Chinese silk into Spain would undercut domestic silk production. Silver could be sent from Spain, but this outflow of the precious metal was precisely the problem all were trying to avoid. In addition, the Pacific route remained largely free of enemies, whereas the Dutch posed a threat along the Cape Route eastward out of Spain. Encircled by volatile trading partners and traitorous rebels, Mendoza argued that the Philippines' commercial lifeline to New Spain sustained the islands' precarious existence on the perimeter of the Asian mainland.

In his defense of the trade Montesclaros also appealed to Castilian chauvinism, the monarch's mandate to rule, and its heritage of exploration. Mendoza recounted to his king the origins of the "western route" pioneered by Magellan and sponsored by Philip's grandfather Charles I, and argued that maintaining the route paid tribute to the labors of the men who had developed it.²² This specifically Castilian endeavor mattered even at a time when the Habsburg crown controlled both the Portuguese East Indies and the Spanish West Indies, for the Portuguese, in Mendoza's eyes, "withhold the friendly intercourse that they owed to the Castilians as the vassals of the same sovereign."²³

If tensions with the Portuguese suggested the importance of the Pacific route, Dutch commercial ambition served as an important rhetorical counterexample to the ideology of

²¹ Ibid. 224.

²² Ibid., 224-6. It should be noted that Magellan was Portuguese.

²³ Ibid.

Castilian rule. "Our design must be more difficult to attain than theirs; for they content themselves with going where they are received, and of receiving what they are given, without caring much whether others enter that district, while your Majesty desires, as is right, to be absolute and sole ruler, and *to shut the gate to all who do not enter under the name and title of vassals* (emphasis added)." Mendoza's proprietary attitude toward the "western route" complemented his imperative to rule through control of the "gates" into Spain's varied kingdoms. Five years later, the same sense of propriety guided decisions taken by the viceroy of New Spain and the Philip III in response to the arrival of Japanese ships at the western "gate" of Acapulco. Like Mendoza, awareness of the Philippine's dependence on foreign politics tempered their concern with control.

Taken together, these proposals highlight the range of debate between 1610 and 1620 regarding the role of Philippines and the activities of the empire in East Asia. In a ten-year span the crown's subjects and advisors variously proposed cutting the Philippines out of the trade with Asia in favor of Spain, cutting the islands out in favor of Macao, cutting Macao out in favor of the Philippines, and maintaining the status quo for reasons of economy, security, and imperial pride. All expressed concern over the drain of American silver west over the Pacific instead of east over to Spain, however different their solutions. In addition, all dealt with the organization of the empire and access to its many "gates."

Debate over the status, scope, and beneficiaries of the Asia trade doubled as a debate over gates internal and external and the connections between them. It was Philip's prerogative to control access between his many kingdoms, an idea premised on the composite nature of the empire. Auduarte's denigration of the Portuguese, Mendoza's Castilian pride, and the unsigned letter suggesting the benefits of less mingling between the Iberians in Asia demonstrate the clear

distinctions made between the kingdoms of Portugal and Castile thirty years into their union under the Habsburg crown. To this rivalry must be added the logistical challenges presented by an empire spread out across continents and oceans. The court debated the position of the Philippines within a web of connections including Macao, Portuguese India, the Moluccas, New Spain, and Peru. None of the authors here proposed—or likely even entertained the idea of—allowing each region to engage in free commerce with all others. Royal decrees attempted to prevent trade between the Philippines and Peru, later extending to a full ban on trade between the viceroyalties of New Spain and Peru. Each proposal to restructure the galleon trade was based on the logic of substitution, not addition. As Mendoza asserted, one of the primary responsibilities of the monarchy lie in controlling the pathways between and into its kingdoms. The repeated injunctions against Chinese goods in Peru show how that control was far from complete. The debate regarding the role of the Philippines stemmed from the crown's inability to regulate these internal relationships to its satisfaction.

Beyond internal dynamics, the islands' ever-vulnerable position amidst the larger polities of Asia made sufficient central control all the more elusive. Mendoza defined proper rule as an enterprise built on the dependence of peripheral areas and central control over access to them, but admitted that the Philippines depended on the good graces of China and Japan. Auduarte advocated increasing this dependence by shifting the trade of the islands more towards Japan and rely on the security its aggressive reputation might provide. The author who lobbied on behalf of Macao premised his idea on the port's lucrative role in the Asian trade, and the benefits to both the coffers of the crown and the efforts of the church. All the petitioners were arguing over which part or parts of the empire would be allowed to knock on the gates of Asian markets. The Philippines occupied an important place in that debate, and the settlement's dependence on the

wealth and priorities of its more powerful neighbors posed an obstacle to the crown's efforts to manage the internal dynamics of its composite empire.

The arrival of Japanese ships off the coast of New Spain stretched the illusion of control even further, for they did not arrive at the "gates" as vassals. In the policy discussions and proposal discussed above, the archipelago factored in primarily as a trading partner for the Philippines or Macao. When Japanese vessels began dropping anchor in Acapulco, they disrupted the paradigm of Pacific trade Spanish officials were struggling to maintain. If permitted, regular commercial relations between Date's domain in Ōshū and New Spain would substantially alter the already unstable calculus governing the empire's commercial activity on either side of the South Sea.

The demands of geography and the limits of technology forced the debate over the *Bautista* to unfold along two tracks during the ship's year-long anchorage in Acapulco. The first followed the rhythm of correspondence imposed by the Atlantic Ocean, whereby the viceroy in Mexico and the king in Madrid penned letters to each other every few months as ships plied the waterways between them. Guadalcázar first reported the *Bautista's* arrival in March of 1617, Philip III issued orders concerning the ship in June, and Guadalcázar acknowledged them in a letter that October. Similarly, the viceroy told of the ship's departure and his final arrangements in a letter from May 1618, prompting discussion in Spain in October and November, and a formal reply in December, which the viceroy acknowledged in a letter from May 1619. Communication between king and viceroy addressed what could be traded, who could travel where, and contingency plans in the event any other Japanese vessels arrived seeking trade. Correspondence lagged behind events on the ground, leaving important decisions in the hands of the viceroy.

In contrast, the debate over customs came to a head in the fall of 1617, soon after Manila solicitor Clemente de Valdes and Hasekura converged on New Spain from the Philippines and Europe respectively. Neither party dawdled. Valdes had submitted his own petition to revoke all customs on the Japanese vessel and gathered six supporting witnesses by the middle of December, and both Hasekura and Sotelo had penned memorials by the end of November. The crew of the *Bautista* may have balked at the idea of paying customs earlier in the year, but no records of any such protest remain. The viceroy reversed his initial decision in mid-December, immediately after Valdes' witnesses completed their testimony. The viceroy presided over the entire affair, rendering his decision without consulting the crown. In fact, almost a year would pass between the viceroy's proclamation rescinding customs and the court in Madrid reviewing that decision. Though not all of his councilors' were happy with Guadalcázar's decision to sacrifice treasury revenues, the king ultimately condoned the decision, for the crown's priorities lie less with what was received and more with what was sent away.

Unfounded Concerns: Trying to Control the Silver Stream

When word of the *Bautista's* arrival reached the viceroy, he ordered the galleon quarantined in Acapulco and sent to Philip III for instructions. Guadalcázar confronted a host of vexing problems, foremost among them the friction between the vessel's stated intentions of friendship and the reported rough treatment of the crown's envoys. The ship was a contradiction; in port to pick up its own embassy while discarding another, gifts and all. The vessel's status and purpose demanded courtesy, but it arrived bearing insult. Unsurprisingly, Guadalcázar adopted a holding pattern, holding the ship in port until Philip could send instructions.²⁴

²⁴ *Dai Nippon shiryō*, vol. 12, no. 12. Letters from viceroy to Philip 1617.3.13 (document CCXXXIV) and 1617.5.24 (CCXXXV). The *Dai Nippon shiryō* is an ongoing compilation of primary sources published by the

The one decision Guadalcázar did make the crown belatedly attempted to block, primarily out of concern for bullion. In his initial letter announcing the vessel's bedraggled arrival off the coast of New Spain in March 1617, Guadalcázar stated his intent to allow the *Bautista* to engage in trade. A second letter followed in late May after the ship moored in Acapulco, stating that all trade would be subject to the same customs rates charged to goods from the Philippines.²⁵ Three weeks after Guadalcázar penned this second letter to his monarch, Philip issued his response to the first, in late June. The monarch weighed in on the situation just this one time while the *Bautista* remained in Acapulco, handicapped by the near half-a-year lag between writing a letter and receiving its response. Philip sought to block the trade his viceroy had allowed, but also planned for contingencies. He ordered Guadalcázar not to permit the sale of any goods if trade had not yet started, but to allow trade to continue if it had already begun. However, in the latter case, the crown mandated that no payment for any goods be allowed in silver. Philip even provided an alternative cost-saving measure, suggesting that if the ship in question were actually Spanish the vessel itself could serve as payment to the Japanese for the merchandise they had brought for trade.²⁶ Responding to these orders in October, Guadalcázar reported that while trade had already begun, he would prevent any exchange in silver. After the vessel departed in the spring of 1618, the viceroy confirmed that the Japanese had been prohibited from taking away gold and silver, and had traded in "the fruits and merchandise of

Historiographical Institute of Tokyo University. Volume 12-12 contains European-language sources as well, each assigned a roman numeral. This source will be abbreviated DNS 12-12, followed by the document number.

²⁵ *ibid.*

²⁶ *ibid.*, CCXXXVI, King to Viceroy, 1617.6.20.

this land."²⁷ Notably, Philip's orders made no mention of customs, the king having not yet received the viceroy's letter discussing them, nor interested in raising the point himself.

The *Bautista*'s Japanese origin rendered Philip's suggestion ineffectual, but the king's response does illustrate the monarchy's lack of enthusiasm at the prospect of an expanded Pacific trade between the archipelago and New Spain and its ongoing concern with the regulation of silver flows. The question of how much silver should leave the Americas and in what direction framed the memorials discussed earlier. This silver question shaped the debate over the viability and function of the Philippines within the greater Habsburg empire. The repeated attempts by Philip II and his son to curtail smuggling and assert control over the content and scope of the China Ships suggest the limits of the crown's reach. Unable to effectively regulate its own subjects, the crown held no interest in an additional Japanese silver corridor running out of Acapulco. Philip's instructions in the event trade had already begun reveal why he had attempted to prevent it in the first place. The monarch could give a little on trade more broadly, but maintained a hard line against any potential expansion of the silver trade.

Reticence on the supply side begs the question of demand, but it is not clear to what extent, if at all, the desire for silver brought Japanese traders to Acapulco. Japanese and Spanish documents related to the embassy provide scant evidence of what Japanese traders piled into the holds of the *Bautista* and what they wanted in return. However, oblique references in the extant record and the broader context suggest that American silver was not a high-priority commodity.

In the early seventeenth century the Japanese archipelago was second only to Spanish America as a producer and exporter of silver. The islands provided a steady stream of the precious metal into the regional economy from roughly 1570-1640, exchanging their silver for

²⁷ *ibid.* CCXLI, Viceroy to King, 1618.5.25. "Fruits" here akin to "products" or "goods."

the silk and other products offered by Chinese merchants and intermediaries in much the same manner as the Spanish in Manila.²⁸ The Spanish Philippines enabled this trade at the time of the Keichō embassy, acting as a hub for both Chinese and Japanese traders.²⁹ Estimates on the volume of Japanese silver exports vary. Kozo and Kamiki posit a range of 92,000-120,000 kgs per year for 1560-1640, a number Flynn and Giraldez accept as well, while de Vries gives half that amount, 59,300 kg per annum.³⁰ American production outpaced that of Japan, but the volume from the latter tracked much higher than the 500,000 pesos (approximately 12,800 kgs) per year officially permitted in the galleons sailing to Manila from New Spain.³¹ Though Date's domain was not a center of silver production, the merchants on the *Bautista* represented trading houses active in Sakai, a major commercial center, and were well-connected to domestic trade networks. Neither they nor Date had reason to seek silver across an ocean when it could be obtained through internal trade routes.

Spanish sources are ambivalent on the potential of silver trade with Japan, and were at times motivated more by fear than fact. A Franciscan passenger on the *Bautista*'s voyage to Acapulco witnessed the cargo being loaded into the vessel's holds shortly prior to its departure. The friar offered no specifics on particular items, but recorded that the overall volume was such that "it seemed naught but that they wished to carry [back] to their land all the silver of New

²⁸ See Dennis Flynn and Arturo Giráldez, "Cycles of Silver: Global Economic Unity through the Mid-Eighteenth Century," *Journal of World History* 13, no. 2 (October 1, 2002), 391–427.

²⁹ See Schurz, chapters 1 and 2 (63–128) for an overview of Chinese and Japanese activity in Manila.

³⁰ Flynn and Giráldez, 404–5. For Kozo and Kamiki's estimate, see Richards, *Precious Metals*, 329–362. For Vries' discussion, see Flynn, Giráldez, and Von Glahn, eds., *Global Connections and Monetary History, 1470-1800* (Burlington: Ashgate, 2003), 35–97. There is also general agreement that the volume of exports picked up in the 17th century. Kozo and Kamiki, state that three quarters of the silver exported from 1560-1640 came after 1600.

³¹ Tepakse, 435-36. Most American silver flowed east to Europe.

Spain."³² In the friar's mind, the Japanese must have wanted silver, but he never provided evidence to support this assumption. Philip made the same assumption when he ordered that the *Bautista* not be allowed to trade for the precious metal. One counterexample is the anonymous author who proposed consolidating the empire's East Asian trade at Macao. In the same letter, he disparaged the potential of any trade between New Spain in Japan. He echoed the logic of supply and demand, writing that the route was "unprofitable, because there are not goods on which to secure gain either going or returning, except what they may get from the silks which they carry from China, to Japon [sic], and from some iron, copper cabinets, and similar articles."³³

Regarding the concrete goods sought by traders on the *Bautista*, Date Masamune's formal letters to Spanish authorities and the internal records of his house offer little insight. The daimyo wrote to the viceroy upon dispatching the *Bautista* in both 1613 and 1616. In each, he employed the oblique term *dōgu* (道具, "tool," "utensil," or perhaps in this instance, "item") in reference to goods he hoped to exchange in trade.³⁴ In 1613, Date wrote that he had loaded the ship with "items of Japan" (*Nihon no dōgu*, 日本之道具), and wished to trade for "items of that country [New Spain]" (*sono kuni no dōgu*, 其の国之道具).³⁵ The purpose of this trade was equally vague, with the daimyo remarking that it would be for "our [my] own use" (*warera yōsho no tame*, 我等用所之ため), perhaps trying to play down the commercial intentions of the mission.³⁶

³² *DNS* 12-12, CCXXI, 417. The Spanish reads "no parece sino que quieren lleuar á su tierra toda la plata de la Nueva España."

³³ B&R XVIII, 60. Earlier the author asserted that the profit in trade with Japan lie in transporting its silver to China.

³⁴ *DNS* 12-12, pages 42–44 and 500–01 for Date's 1613 and 1616 letters, respectively.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 43.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 43.

Date described the gifts he sent to both the viceroy and the head of the Franciscan order in New Spain in a similar manner, referring to them for example as "three kinds of items from this country" (*kono kuni no dōgu sanshoku*, 此の国之道具三色) in 1616, without any further elaboration.³⁷ The only other word used to denominate goods was *nimotsu* (荷物, "cargo"), which appeared in his second letter to the viceroy.³⁸ Here he used the equally generic *nimotsu* to contrast the merchants' cargo with his own, again written simply as *dōgu*. Merchants were aboard the *Bautista* during its first crossing but went unmentioned; their inclusion the second time made Date's commercial intentions more explicit. The only concrete information on what the Japanese traded for comes from the diary of the Englishman Richard Cocks, head of the East India Company's factory in Japan at the time. Cocks reported in a letter that upon its return from Acapulco in 1615, the *Bautista* had "brought good quantety of broad cloth, kersies, perpetuanos, and raz de Millan, which they offer at a loe rate."³⁹ All of these were types of textiles, and Cocks made no mention of bullion or precious metals.

In addition to the "items" and "cargo" he wanted to trade, Date requested that the viceroy dispatch navigators and sailors to Japan. In his 1613 letter they were referred to as *pirōto* (びろうと, "pilot") and *funeshu* (舟衆) respectively, and in the 1616 letter, *anjin yakusha* (按針役者) and *kogusha* (こぐしや).⁴⁰ Date explained that such persons would help ensure the smooth passage of ships between Ōshū and New Spain in the years ahead. The construction and

³⁷ Ibid., 501.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Ibid., CCXXVI, Richard Cocks to John Gourney, 1615.12.16.

⁴⁰ *ibid.* Japanese terms are presented above as written, a mix of *hiragana* and Chinese characters.

navigation of the *Bautista* had only been possible with Spanish assistance, and the daimyo recognized the need for Spanish expertise in any commercial endeavor linking his domain with New Spain. Date's desire to acquire maritime skill mirrored the Tokugawa. Ieyasu had the Englishman Will Adams build two Spanish-style vessels for the shogunate's earlier forays into commerce with New Spain.⁴¹ In his own letters, Date paired the request for extremely valuable and specialist knowledge with offers of safe passage, ample provisions, ready aid, and a warm reception for religious and secular alike in Ōshū.⁴² Beyond any material exchange, Date maintained an equal if not more fervent interest in a different type of commodity: the knowledge required to sustain American trade indefinitely.

"They Have no Pilots": Setting a New Course for the *Bautista*

The potential for Japanese and Spanish vessels to traffic the route between Ōshū and Acapulco prompted discussion of control over access, technology, and the movement of the empire's subjects. As with silver, officials in New Spain and Iberia jealously guarded their prerogative in these areas, but also tempered their actions out of concern for the Philippines and the empire's broader relationship with the Japanese archipelago. Hasekura's sojourn in Europe complicated the issue of stronger ties with the archipelago, and the *Bautista's* arrival muddled the picture further. The vessel's mixed messages produced an ambivalent response, as the king and his viceroy endeavored to impede commercial relations without expressly denying them. This

⁴¹ A brief account of Adams' time in Japan can be found in C.R. Boxer's *The Christian Century in Japan 1549–1650* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1951), 285–292. See also William Farrington's *The English Factory in Japan: 1613–1623*, and Derek Massarella's *A World Elsewhere: Europe's Encounter with Japan in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*.

⁴² These promises are made in his letters to the viceroy cited above, but are more explicit in letters he wrote to the head of the Franciscan order in New Spain. See for example, *DNS* 12-12, 65–66.

ambivalence is clearly seen in their decisions regarding the final destination and fate of the *Bautista*.

The vessel's mission was undercut by the remnants, material and personal, of the shunned mission from New Spain it returned to Acapulco. The *Bautista* first departed Acapulco in 1615, transporting gifts from Philip and a trio of Franciscans bearing a letter from the king. The emissaries' reception was hostile from the beginning, and Tokugawa Ieyasu's death in 1616 during their stay did not help matters. His son and successor Hidetada rejected Philip's gifts, denied the mission any formal audience, and unceremoniously sent all three back on the *Bautista*'s second voyage to Acapulco.⁴³ One friar, Diego de Santa Catalina, wrote to the viceroy soon after making landfall in New Spain. Santa Catalina told of his mission's mistreatment and the plight of the ship and crew in crossing, bundled together with a more detailed letter describing his party's difficulties in Japan.⁴⁴ Guadalcázar forwarded both to Philip in his March 1617 letter reporting on the *Bautista*'s arrival. Thus, when Philip issued his instructions to his viceroy in June of that same year, he did so with full knowledge of the fact that his gifts and representatives had been dismissed, and that the persecution of Christianity was intensifying across Japan.

In his June instructions, Philip concisely laid out his wishes regarding the vessel his viceroy had quarantined in Acapulco.⁴⁵ As detailed above, Philip sought to avoid trade if possible, forbid payment in silver in the event trade had started, and suggested selling the ship to the Japanese as a means of avoiding payment—and trade—altogether. To further shore up

⁴³ Their treatment is recounted by an anonymous friar in *DNS* 12-12, CCXXI.

⁴⁴ *DNS* 12-12, CCXXXIII. The experiences of these friars are discussed in Chapter 4.

⁴⁵ The following summarizes *DNS* 12-12, CCXXXVI. Philip III to the viceroy, 1617.6.20.

finances, the crown ordered that the gifts Hidetada rejected be sold back, and the money placed in a separate account in the treasury.⁴⁶ The king ordered that the Japanese be treated well, but that the viceroy discuss with them the gravity of their own land's poor treatment of missionaries. The ambassador Hasekura was to return to Japan on the vessel when it departed. However, Philip forbade any Spanish sailors from sailing the vessel back to Japan in light of increasing persecution. Finally, he entrusted the viceroy to decide whether the vessel would return directly to Japan or via the Philippines.

The personnel and destination of the ship were closely intertwined, as Philip and his councilors suspected, and the viceroy certainly knew. Date owned the vessel and sponsored its construction, but the Japanese could not yet cross the Pacific unaided. Spanish labor helped build the ship four years earlier, and Spanish sailors and pilots navigated over the open waters. Santa Catalina praised the efforts of one such sailor in particular in his letter.⁴⁷ The Japanese contingent of merchants and sailors were captained by Date's vassal Yokozawa Shōgen. Japanese and Spanish alike recognized his authority over the vessel, but he was not a pilot.⁴⁸ Date's requests for pilots demonstrate the continued need for and interest in Spanish navigational skills for the open-water sailing inherent to trans-Pacific trade. Philip's order barring Spanish passage on any return voyage to Japan in 1617 served as an indirect rejection of Date's requests for "trade" in Spanish sailors and their valuable skills. Philip valued this expertise as well, and the empire

⁴⁶ As with Date's "gifts," no specifics are given. As the gifts were sold, it can be inferred that they were goods from New Spain or Spain rather than particular items specifically commissioned.

⁴⁷ *DNS* 12-12, CCXXXIII, 436.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.* Santa Catalina refers to Yokozawa as the "captain" in his letter to the viceroy. Date house records also name Yokozawa when recording the *Bautista's* final departure from Japan in the fall of 1616. See *DNS* 12-12, 495.

treated the maritime routes and nautical maps as state secrets at this time.⁴⁹ In sum, Date asked for a technology the crown was disinclined to share, raised the specter of trading in a good the crown did not want to lose, and made an offer of welcome and protection to Spanish missionaries and ships that appeared more dubious with each new report. These considerations, together with the Tokugawa shogunate's chilly reception of the Santa Catalina legation, no doubt further dissuaded Madrid from allowing Spanish subjects to sail a Japanese ship back to the archipelago.

If the Japanese could not return on their own, and no Spanish were permitted to sail to Japan, the only remaining option consisted of a Spanish crew sailing the ship to the Philippines. Guadalcázar replied to the king to that effect, specifically citing the fact that the Japanese contingent had no pilots of their own.⁵⁰ This resolution further thwarted the ambitions of Date's embassy, and sent yet another signal that the empire held no interest in Japanese commerce with New Spain. Sailing for the Philippines rather than Japan denied Hasekura's the very route between eastern Japan and the Pacific coast of Spanish America he had been charged with opening. It was also a clear rejection of the technological transfer underling Date's offer of commerce, provisions, and missionary work free of persecution.

The Pull from Manila: The Bautista Gets a Tax Break

However, Philip and his viceroy did not shape policy toward the archipelago and its inconvenient ship alone. A representative from the Philippines islands played a prominent role in determining the conditions under which the *Bautista* would be allowed to trade. Where the king

⁴⁹ J.B. Harley, "Silences and Secrecy: The Hidden Agenda of Cartography in Early Modern Europe," chapter 3 of his *The New Nature of Maps: Essays in the History of Cartography* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002).

⁵⁰ *DNS* 12-12, CCXXXVII, Viceroy to King, 1617.10.20.

ordered the viceroy to inhibit trade and transfer alike, a solicitor from Manila lobbied Guadalcázar to give the *Bautista* a tax break. Both the directions from on high and appeals from below, though seemingly oppositional, stemmed from a shared wariness regarding Japan and concern for the welfare of the Philippines.

The viceroy's back and forth with his monarch extended over half a year, but the appeal brought forth by Manila solicitor Clemente de Valdes was settled in less than two months, and without any input from the crown. Not long after Guadalcázar wrote the king acknowledging his orders, Hasekura's party and Valdes converged on New Spain from opposite directions in fall 1617, the former from Seville and the latter from Manila. Hasekura landed on New Spain's Atlantic coast in late September or early October, and was in Mexico by the end of the month.⁵¹ Valdes departed Manila in the latter half of July, and likely landed in Acapulco in late October or early November before journeying to Mexico himself.⁵² Hasekura's party sent memorials requesting the revocation of customs at the end of November, while the viceroy heard Valdes' appeal in the first half of December.⁵³

On December 19th, 1617 Guadalcázar granted their wish on his own authority, without consulting his monarch.⁵⁴ The viceroy did not report his decision until nearly six months later. Writing the next year, Guadalcázar summarized the petition and explained that he acted as he

⁵¹ Gonoï, 203–204.

⁵² This chronology is based on Valdes' authorization as solicitor-general of the Philippines, signed in Manila on 1617.7.12. He would have departed on that year's voyage back to Acapulco soon after. Valdes' testimony is found in volume 12–45 of the aforementioned *Dai Nippon Shiryō*, 8-13. Hereafter this volume is abbreviated DNS 12–45, followed by the page numbers.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 20–27 for Hasekura party letters, and 8–19 for Valdes' petition and witness testimony.

⁵⁴ DNS 12-12, CCXXXVIII.

thought the king would have wanted.⁵⁵ The time required to consult the king made waiting impractical, even in the sensitive matter of foreign trade. Receiving a response would have entailed waiting half a year, but the actual delay in the ship's departure would have been twice as long. Once he decided the *Bautista's* course to the Philippines in the latter half of 1617, the viceroy arranged for the vessel to accompany the fleet being dispatched from New Spain the following year. Ships departed for Manila but once a year and followed a rough schedule; missing the outbound journey in 1618 thus meant a full year's delay, anathema to all involved. Instead, the viceroy settled the matter internally, pulled by concerns in Manila just as he was pushed by the agendas of those in Madrid.

Valdes grounded his petition to revoke all levies against the *Bautista* on three points: Philippine settlements relied on trade with Japan; up to this point that trade had been conducted customs-free; and levies imposed against the Japanese in New Spain would provoke disastrous, retaliatory duties against the Spanish in the Philippines. Valdes pleaded the fragility of the islands, and explicitly tied decisions in New Spain regarding the Japanese to their potential repercussions across the Pacific. He buttressed his appeal by gathering six citizens of New Spain with experience in the Philippines to testify before officials in Mexico. Valdes grounded his own right of appeal in a July 1617 document, signed in Manila, granting him the power to solicit on behalf of the city. Neither Valdes nor his witnesses put forth any arguments suggesting a direct material benefit to New Spain; instead his petition proceeded from the frank acknowledgement of the Philippine's dependence on its neighbors in a manner reminiscent of Montecclaros' letter in defense of the islands' trade.

⁵⁵ Ibid., CCXXXIX, Viceroy to King, 1618.5.25.

Valdes framed his arguments in terms of the necessity of and benefits to trade with Japan. Silver again featured prominently, with Valdes just as determined to keep the silver flowing into the Philippines as Philip III was to regulate the tap. Valdes sought to preserve the free flow of silver from the islands' other principal supplier, Japan. Wherever its origin, the precious metal attracted Chinese junks loaded with silk, and this exchange anchored the settlements' economy. Valdes thus began his petition by asserting that the well-being of the Philippines depended on the steady arrival of Japanese silver.⁵⁶ The trade in silk and silver in turn made possible the islands' continued service to God and crown. In Valdes' formulation, contacts built through trade in the Philippines facilitated the Catholic mission in Japan, while the profits of the king's loyal subjects in Manila paid for the security of both secular and religious endeavors from the predations of pirates and the rebel Dutch. Valdes emphasized that this trade was free of any levies, either in Manila or the ports of Japan. He warned that igniting a tariff war with the Japanese to serve the treasury of New Spain would endanger the Philippine economy, and thereby threaten the religious missions and military security that trade made possible. These arguments proved convincing to the viceroy, and large portions of his proclamation revoking customs lifted sections of Valdes' appeal word for word.⁵⁷

For their part, the six witnesses interviewed in support of Valdes' petition consistently testified that trade with Japan was conducted customs-free, and that retaliatory tariffs would follow should any taxes be levied against the *Bautista*⁵⁸. Santiago de Uriarte was a citizen of Mexico who had lived in the Philippines in 1608. He testified that no tariffs were paid in either

⁵⁶ *DNS* 12-45, 8–13. The rest of this paragraph draws on Valdes' letter on these same pages.

⁵⁷ Compare *DNS* 12-12, CCXXXVIII Order of the Viceroy, 1617.12.19 and *DNS* 12-45, 8–13 for Valdes' text.

⁵⁸ The witnesses' testimony is found in *DNS* 12-45, 14–20. I omit citation of all but direct quotes and adopt modern orthography for names.

Japan or Manila on entry or exit, and that this arrangement was a boon to the people of Manila. Blas Geronimo served as a scribe onboard the galleon *Santana* during a stop in Japan 1609. Geronimo testified that he had personally sold 25,000 pesos worth of goods in order to outfit the ship for the return voyage, and had not paid tariffs on anything. Juan de Urbina, a lathe operator, also worked aboard the *Santana* and sold textiles to the Japanese, again without tariffs. The surgeon Andres Martinez de Villaviciosa spent three years in the Philippines and Japan. He testified that no levies should ever be charged against the Japanese, and that doing so would result in a loss of trade for the Philippines.

All six were equally consistent on the threat of retaliation. They rooted their conviction in the temperament of their trading partners, whose bellicosity was matched solely by how indispensable they were to the Spanish settlements. The surgeon Villaviciosa warned of an excessive Japanese response to any tariffs "due to their uncouth and poor disposition."⁵⁹ Ladron de Peralta, a man with nineteen years of experience in the Philippines, adopted similar language, as did the scribe Geronimo and Urbina the lathe operator. The most forceful statement came from the infantry captain Juan de Leoz, who swore that every *real* of tax collected by the Spanish in New Spain would be demanded ten times over by the Japanese on account of their forceful temperament. These men embodied the central tension between the potential for profit and the threat of conflict animating the relationship between Japan and the Philippines, citing their dealings with the "bellicose" people and warning of their aggression. Urbina and Geronimo explicitly mention trading in Japan, while the rest testified to having been there and described trade between Manila and Japan in general terms. All had likely participated in trade to some degree or another, be it with Japanese merchants in Manila or in the ports of southern Kyushu as

⁵⁹ Ibid., 19. The Spanish reads "por su resia y mala condición."

Urbina and Geronimo had done. To a man, they spoke of the Japanese as a people not to be trifled with. There was no explicit mention of military conflict between the Philippines and the archipelago, but the tone of all six witnesses, two of whom were soldiers, suggest that the outcome of any such conflict was neither favorable nor in doubt. The relationship with the Japanese was necessary, possibly manageable, but not one that the Spanish could hope to dictate unilaterally.

In describing Manila's dependency, two witnesses took the conversation beyond silver into the realm of basic provisions. Villaviciosa testified that vessels putting into port from Japan also carried quantities of flour, biscuits, bacon, and other supplies which helped sustain Manila.⁶⁰ The lathe operator Urbina echoed this, claiming that the ships from Manila loaded up on provisions in Japan, and that Japanese ships brought similar supplies to Manila.⁶¹ The two may also have been touching on the outfitting of those Spanish ships which by intention or accident sought refuge in Japanese ports during the hazardous voyages to and from the Americas. This was especially likely on the eastward Pacific crossing from Manila to Acapulco, when Spanish vessels sailed northeast on the Kuroshio ("Black current") off the Pacific coast of Japan on the initial leg of their journey before tacking east across the ocean at a more northern latitude. A disruption to the supplying of these galleons would have repercussions beyond the trade between Manila and the Japanese archipelago, possibly destabilizing the traffic connecting the Philippines to America, the settlements' principal lifeline to the empire.

Finally, like Valdes a portion of the witnesses touched on the Catholic mission in the Philippines, but the fate of any religious mandate was always couched in terms of the immediate

⁶⁰ *ibid.*, 18-19.

⁶¹ *ibid.*, 15-16.

material threat to the islands' economic viability. Uriarte described the free trade of goods between Manila and Japan as good for the crown, a boon for its vassals in the Philippines, and a service to God.⁶² Villaviciosa worried that any loss of trade would endanger the Japanese Christian community by similarly disrupting their contact with missionaries departing out of Manila.⁶³ Peralta opined that a blow to commercial ties would in turn sever the ties between missionaries and the Japanese flock in its charge.⁶⁴ However, Manila's reliance on commerce with Japan and the current state of that trade framed each testimony, not the perilous position of Christian souls in the islands and the archipelago. The spiritual blow followed the commercial, augmenting arguments for the economic significance of trade with Japan, rather than serving as the foundation for arguments centered on the spiritual significance of the Philippines. The remaining witnesses shared this same emphasis on commerce, but omitted any mention of the Church. Service to God was but one benefit of safeguarding trade, but not the principal reason for securing it.

Valdes and his assembled witnesses were not alone in weighing in on the matter. Sotelo and Hasekura submitted their own memorials appealing the viceroy's decision to levy tariffs on the *Bautista* toward the end of November 1617.⁶⁵ Where the solicitor and his witnesses emphasized the economic stakes for the Philippines, the Hasekura contingent spoke of the diplomatic repercussions of charging tariffs. Unsurprisingly, it appears all of them were

⁶² Ibid., 14-15..

⁶³ ibid., 18-19.

⁶⁴ ibid., 19-20.

⁶⁵ The memorial Sotelo submitted with two other friars is dated 1617.11.28, while Hasekura's is undated. The text of the Hasekura petition is in Spanish, but affixed with Hasekura's seal, suggesting it was submitted at roughly the same time as Sotelo's.

considered together. The viceroy's later proclamation makes reference to the legation's petitions, and all the memorials were subsequently archived as a single group. There is no mention of any explicit cooperation or coordination between Valdes' camp and that of the embassy, but each must have been aware of the other. The role of Yokozawa's group —i.e. those Japanese who had arrived on the *Bautista* in 1617 and were not part of Hasekura's entourage returning from Europe—is also unclear. The Japanese captain is mentioned in multiple Spanish sources but never speaks for himself in New Spain. However, it is clear from the content of Sotelo's and Hasekura's appeal that each had been briefed on recent events in Japan, suggesting that Date's lead representatives took point in the appeals process after consulting with the *Bautista* crew.

Sotelo's memorial, penned with two other friars, based its request to repeal customs on the ramifications for the Christian mission in Japan. The Franciscans discussed the mission's prospects through a *realpolitik* analysis of events on the ground, Date's potential role in the leadership of Japan, and the opportunity to leverage the situation to meet Spanish (and celestial) ends. The authors relied on gross exaggerations and hearsay regarding Date's influence throughout in order to buttress their points. They claimed that he was positioned to assist the new "emperor" (shogun) Hidetada as a coequal, or possibly assume rule of Japan as emperor in his own right. The friars peppered their document with anecdotes and examples to support this claim. They attributed the recent defeat of Tokugawa rival Toyotomi Hideyori at Osaka in 1615 to both the Tokugawa and Date. The friars further claimed that Date was the only lord to ignore the Tokugawa's recent one-castle requirement, already possessing thirty fortifications and building new ones.⁶⁶ Notably, they played up Date's relationship to the previous "emperor" Ieyasu, recounting a deathbed visit wherein the dying emperor supposedly entreated Date to be at

⁶⁶ 12-45, p. 24-27.

peace with his son and thereby maintain peace in the realm. This apparently followed an earlier episode recounted by the friars where Ieyasu refused his son's calls to launch an attack against Date.⁶⁷

These anecdotes and the spin accompanying them sought to establish Date as a critically ally in furthering the spiritual and materials aims of the Habsburg Empire. In the memorial's account, the Ōshū daimyo was uniquely qualified to intercede and perhaps check the rising tide of persecution against Christians at the hands of the new shogun. Favorable treatment of his representatives in New Spain and a friendly reply (i.e. support of further trade between Date's "kingdom" and New Spain) might convince the powerful lord to make just such an intercession.⁶⁸ In the best-case scenario Date might convert or even seize control of all Japan, an instant boon to Christianity if the viceroy took the proper steps in maintaining good faith with this powerful figure.⁶⁹

Having laid out the spiritual stakes, concerns, and possibilities, the friars elaborated on the practical solutions and consequences. As a service to God, a matter of importance to the realm, and for the good of all concerned, they asked that no tariffs be levied against any goods on the *Bautista*, for they all belonged to Date, his allies, and vassals.⁷⁰ Taxing such a critical ally would be a diplomatic insult, and risk the goodwill of Christianity's greatest benefactor. Furthermore, the troubled crossing forced the *Bautista* to abandon a good portion of its cargo, and the merchants and crew might lack the funds to outfit the ship for the journey home if made

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ Ibid. Here the friars also cited the precedent of the daimyo of Bigo intervening successfully on behalf of a persecuted Lotus sect.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ Ibid. The phrasing here resembled that of the secular witnesses, but notably service to God came first.

to pay taxes on top of the loss of cargo. The authors also warned that the Dutch might point to Spanish tariffs levied in Acapulco in their efforts to convince Hidetada to levy taxes against all Iberian goods coming out of Manila and Macao. In the worst-case scenario, Hidetada could revoke all the protections his father Ieyasu previously offered the Spanish, and impound any vessels unfortunate enough to arrive in Japan save those which had the good fortune to be swept ashore in Date's territory. The authors urged the viceroy to weigh these dire consequences against the comparatively minor tariff revenue he might extract from the *Bautista*.

Sotelo and his companions closed with the audacious recommendation that the gifts Hidetada rejected be repurposed and sent back to Japan, this time as gifts for Date.⁷¹ Failing that, the originals gifts could be sold and the funds used to purchase other items for the daimyo, or some money might be set aside in the Philippines for the purchase of items there. The friars cited the Japanese custom of always having gifts when going before a lord, especially when carrying the response of another ruler.⁷² In effect, they asked the viceroy to bear Hidetada's insult and try again, this time with a more amenable partner. For any such gesture to be effective, it would need to be packaged with the revocation of tariffs, lest the viceroy commit an insult of his own.

In this discussion of gifts, Sotelo and his peers demonstrated familiarity with recent events in New Spain and across the Pacific. There is no record of Sotelo conversing with Santa Catalina, but given that both were Franciscans and tied to diplomatic relations with Japan, it seems likely that Sotelo had learned a great deal about his counterpart's negative experience in Japan and sought to turn this information to the embassy's benefit. The extended discussion of the new "emperor's" hostility and gift suggestions demonstrated knowledge of Hidetada's cool

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² Ibid.

reception of Santa Catalina and rejection of the crown's tokens of goodwill. The proposal that money for the purchase of gifts be set aside in the Philippines implies that Sotelo already tacitly accepted that they would be returning to Japan via Manila. The viceroy wrote of his intention to arrange passage for the *Bautista* to the Philippines in October. Sotelo's submitted his appeal a month later, and said nothing about the ships' destination, indirectly conceding the point. Instead the trio of authors focused their energy on the portrayal of Date as a refuge and ally for the Christian mission, whose ongoing protection in spiritual matters hinged on the appropriate resolution of the secular concerns presented by the *Bautista*.

Hasekura's own petition, or the petition bearing his name, attempted to situate the embassy and its ship among three leaders in its appeal to a fourth, the viceroy.⁷³ Hasekura's memorial bound the *Bautista* to his own diplomatic mission, in turn attaching the mission to Date's dignity, Philip III's honor, and the potential wrath of the "emperor" Hidetada. He claimed the *Bautista* had returned to Acapulco at his and Sotelo's written request, and that the ship, its captain Yokozawa, and its cargo were all either Date's vassals or the property of the daimyo and his allies.⁷⁴ Hasekura pointed out, as had Sotelo, that the ship had lost the bulk of its cargo and could not bear the cost of taxes and still outfit itself for the journey home. Hasekura also directly invoked the Spanish crown. Mistreatment of the embassy—for the ship was part of the embassy—in Acapulco would insult Date and stain the reputation of the Spanish monarchy writ-large. It would undo the goodwill the king had shown Hasekura during his time in Madrid and in

⁷³ Ibid, p. 20-23. The original is in Spanish but bears Hasekura's signature. Sotelo and the other friars drafted the actual memorial, and likely had a fair amount of input regarding its content as well. Hasekura's "authorship" of any document in a European language raises similar questions, but for the sake of convenience, I refer to this document throughout as his.

⁷⁴ Gonoï disputes this claim, and thinks it more likely that the ship departed Acapulco in 1615 with instructions from Hasekura and Sotelo to return. See Gonoï, 206-7.

the Holy See in Rome. It might also insult and incite the Japanese emperor, here again a convenient foil to Date, the would-be benefactor. The distinction between Date and the Tokugawa, made even more forcefully by Sotelo, gave Hasekura purchase to raise the specter of Japanese retaliation while maintaining his distance from that threat. The description of the Tokugawa shogunate's potential punitive actions here paralleled those listed by Valdes and Sotelo: retaliatory tariffs, revocation of fair treatment for and provisioning of Spanish vessels in the archipelago, and the possible confiscation of ships and their merchandise.⁷⁵ The memorial's final caution maintained the tension between a warning and an expression of good intentions. "Many are the times in which the strong winds of that sea [The Pacific] oblige [Spanish ships] to arrive where they don't wish to be, and because this inconvenience can occur in no time at all, I warn Your Excellency of the risk that may occur in it [the decision to collect taxes on the *Bautista*] with love and openness."⁷⁶ Hasekura's concluding profession of "love and openness," if more strategic than genuine, still asserted a relationship with the king. The ambassador thus wore many hats: a representative of a prominent lord, a man favored by the viceroy's own king, and a foreboding, yet sympathetic, messenger warning of the ire of Japan's current ruler. The principal claimants to the viceroy made their appeal in relational terms, be it Valdes describing the economic relations of the Philippines, or Sotelo focusing on Date's potential role as benefactor to the Christian population and coequal to the rulers of Japan. Hasekura followed suit, emphasizing the roles and concerns of multiple sovereigns, and by extension asking Guadalcázar to consider the same web of connections.

⁷⁵ DNS 12-45, p. 20-23.

⁷⁶ Ibid., 23.

Where it took the better part of a year for Guadalcázar to consult with Philip and confirm the overall response to the *Bautista*, the viceroy resolved the customs question in a few weeks. He and the treasury of New Spain together agreed not to levy taxes in December 1617, and the viceroy made a proclamation to this effect that day.⁷⁷ The decision directly followed the testimony of Valdes' six witnesses as recorded by an official in Mexico between the 14th and 19th of the same month.

Whatever the unofficial calculus undergirding the viceroy's decision, his official statement framed itself as a resolution made on behalf of the Spanish in the Philippines. The proclamation opened by responding specifically to the appeal of the "Procurador General de la ciudad de Manila," giving Valdes pride of place among the petitioners. Large portions of the text were a direct copy of Valdes' own petition citing the importance of Japanese silver to the Philippines, the absence of tariffs on the islands' trade with Japan, and the important service to God and state rendered by the Spanish in the westernmost outpost of what was then still administered as a part of New Spain.⁷⁸ The three friars, along with Hasekura (in that order) appeared later as corroborating witness, along with many of their arguments. The decree cited the disproportionate damage to trade in the Philippines that would result from the collection of a meager tax bill in Acapulco, the potential loss of Date's favor, and the possible revocation of the security granted to Spanish ships in the area. The final consequence Sotelo and Hasekura warned of, as summarized by the viceroy, was telling: "it would break the peace that is so important to preserve."⁷⁹ After careful consultation and consideration of the petitioners, singling out Valdes

⁷⁷ 12-12. CCXXXVIII.

⁷⁸ Compare 12-12, CCXXXVIII and 12-45, 8–13.

⁷⁹ Ibid, 12-12, p. 444. "se quebraría la paz que tanto ymporta conserver."

again by name, Guadalcázar ordered the suspension of any and all customs from “the merchandise and things that the said Japanese, mentioned above, have sold and will sell in this kingdom.”⁸⁰ Limited in scope to the “said Japanese” then in Acapulco, the proclamation said nothing about the prospects for future trade between New Spain and Japan, specifically whether or not customs would be expected of any other Japanese vessel. Though the text referred to Date and Hasekura, the proclamation made clear that tariffs had been rescinded primarily out of concern for the threat to existing relations between the Philippines and Japan rather than any potential relationship between New Spain proper and Date’s “kingdom” of Ōshū. In the end, the shogun’s wrath proved more persuasive than the daimyo’s goodwill.

Though he likely never learned of it, Guadalcázar also risked the displeasure of his own superiors. The viceroy advised Philip of the decision as part of a report sent in May of 1618, half a year after concluding the matter. His summary was concise. The “Procurador General” of the Philippines had presented a petition requesting the suspension of customs “on account of the inconveniences that would result from it with regards to the trade of India and the said islands [the Philippines].”⁸¹ Guadalcázar included a full copy of his proclamation, but the short executive summary suggests the viceroy’s central concerns. Sotelo, Hasekura, and the mission were excised completely, and the viceroy represented the event as an action taken at the behest of representatives from the Philippines in order to avoid injuring the valuable trade of the Indies.

The proclamation reached the monarchy’s *senor fiscal* prior to its review by the Council of the Indies, the body established to advise the king and design policy for the monarch’s administration of its overseas territories. The *fiscal* was not pleased. He advised that the viceroy

⁸⁰ Ibid. “de las mercadurías y cosas que los dichos japones susoreferidos an bendido y bendiesen en este reino.”

⁸¹ Ibid, 12-12, p. 445. “por los ymcombinientes que desto resultarían al trato de la Yndia y de dichas Yslas.”

be notified “that in no instance should he pardon the duties owed to His Majesty, but that likewise he order they [the duties] be paid in full despite what they [any claimants] say to him and whatever reasons they give for it.”⁸² The *fiscal* went on to warn of the harm to the royal treasury that would result from granting similar exceptions, and admonished the viceroy for exceeding his authority.⁸³ The full Council convened in November 1618 to consider the *fiscal*’s remarks and the matter as a whole. The *Bautista* had long since departed Acapulco, leaving the organs of state in Madrid no opportunity to directly intervene. Instead, without commenting on the viceroy’s executive authority, the Council not only condoned his resolution but also expanded upon it, exempting from tariffs any Japanese trading ships that might arrive in the future. However, if one should drop anchor in Acapulco, the viceroy was to maintain an account of all customs duties that would have collected in normal circumstances and report it to the court.⁸⁴

In this way, central authorities could stay abreast of both the scope of the trade and the potential revenue for the crown and plan accordingly. Guadalcázar likely knew he was skirting the limits of his authority, one reason why he had limited his exemption specifically to the *Bautista*. In its response, the crown affirmed and extended the viceroy’s resolution, but also reasserted its own prerogative by ordering a record of taxes owed but not collected. This shadow ledger served as a contingency plan and allowed the court to weigh in on a process it had been cut out of initially. Finally, it demonstrated the ongoing attempts of the court to straddle the line between discouraging trade with the Japanese without explicitly rebuking or refusing them. Thus

⁸² Ibid, 445. “que por ningun caso rremita los derechos pertenecientes á Su Magestad, sin o que ygualmente los mande cobrar de todos aunque se le digan y aleguen rracones para ello” [fix c in rracones].

⁸³ Ibid.

⁸⁴ Ibid, 446.

technically the *Bautista* saga had resulted in an indefinite tax break and trade concessions, albeit for a group that would never learn of or act upon its privileged position. The actions taken by both the court and the viceroy inhibited the capacity for further trade between Japan and New Spain, and nothing had yet been put in writing to encourage it. Neither had Spanish officials gone so far as to condemn it. Unofficially, the “gate” (in Montesclaros’ parlance) remained ajar, though that fact remained consciously hidden from any Japanese party that might think of approaching.⁸⁵ In the end, the viceroy never made an entry in the shadow ledger, largely due to another fateful decision he made, not about the *Bautista*’s crew, cargo, or destination, but the vessel itself.

Philip’s original instructions concerning the *Bautista* suggested that the ship be sold to the Japanese in lieu of any merchandise, enabling “trade” without actually having to trade any goods. Unfortunately for Philip, the *Bautista* was a Japanese vessel, and trade—excluding silver—proceeded accordingly. Guadalcázar however, took the idea and ran with it. In his October 1617 response to the king, the viceroy reported arranging for the Japanese to sell the ship to the Spanish upon their arrival in the Philippines, where it could be put to good use against the Dutch. Unable to safely cross the Pacific without Spanish navigational expertise, the *Bautista* would form part of the armada escorting the new Governor-General of the Philippines Alonso Fajardo de Entenza to the territories under his charge.

The viceroy had hit upon an especially tidy resolution. The Philippines wrote annually for more troops, more guns, and more ships as Spanish forces struggled to contain the encroachment of the Dutch VOC in the waters of East Asia. The need was especially dire following the Dutch

⁸⁵ “Ajar” being the favored parlance of Robert Innes in his influential dissertation on Japan’s foreign trade in the seventeenth century, “The Door Ajar: Japan’s Foreign Trade in the Seventeenth Century.”

victory against a joint Portuguese-Spanish force in the Moluccas in 1616, during which an illness had claimed life of the previous governor-general. Fajardo succeeded to the post in 1618, and soon had his hands full defending Manila itself against the Dutch.⁸⁶ The new governor-general had arrived with funds, over a hundred soldiers, and the *Bautista*, but soon asked Philip for more reinforcements. He wrote in 1619 that the settlement claimed just four sea-worthy ships for the islands' defense, the Japanese galleon numbering among them.⁸⁷

Additionally, selling the *Bautista* removed the means for a quick Japanese return to New Spain. Date required a ship capable of a four-month voyage and a crew to sail it. The king and viceroy had just deprived him of both. Ships, Japanese or otherwise, would still sail between Manila and the ports of Kyushu in southwestern Japan, but the *Bautista* had originated much further north and east, and as the viceroy likely surmised, there was no fleet waiting to take its place. The sale also secured compliance with the king's order prohibiting Spaniards from sailing on Japanese vessels. Some sailors might have been discretely convinced to sail to eastern Japan aboard the *Bautista* from the Philippines. Similarly, leaving the Japanese in possession of the ship left open the possibility that Spaniards could be pressed into service, as Santa Catalina alleged occurred for the *Bautista*'s second crossing. Neither was now an option. Finally, the sale would place the embassy more firmly under Spanish authority. The ship had been used as a diplomatic chip to appeal for concessions. The sale swept that leverage off the board.

How and why the embassy legation acquiesced to a sale so obviously at odds with their mission is unclear, and accounts of the sale conflict. Neither Date nor Hasekura ever referenced

⁸⁶ See Arturo Giraldez, *The Age of Trade: The Manila Galleons and the Dawn of the Global Economy* (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield, 2015), 94-99 for an overview of Spanish-Dutch conflict in the Indies.

⁸⁷ B&R XVIII, 247-51.

the sale of the *Bautista* or gave an opinion on it. In a letter he wrote to the Council of Indies from New Spain in 1618, Sotelo stated that Hasekura volunteered the ship to Fajardo, but this anecdote clearly formed part of a last-ditch effort to curry favor in Spain, and may well have been Sotelo's spin on the viceroy's decision.⁸⁸ Guadalcázar made no mention of Hasekura's generosity. The governor-general reported on the sale to the king in the above-mentioned letter from 1619, writing that he had first borrowed and then purchased the ship at a very cheap price, but only after "a great deal of trouble" from its owners.⁸⁹ A letter sent by an official in the Philippines at roughly the same time went into more detail. In the official's telling, the Spanish originally offered to borrow the *Bautista* for battle and reimburse the Japanese for any damages or losses incurred. He cited the role of the Franciscans as intermediaries in the sale, and accredited Fajardo's own good standing with the Japanese as well. The official made no mention of trouble, but agreed with Fajardo that the Spanish purchased the vessel at a very cheap price.⁹⁰ Both accounts give the impression that the decision to purchase the vessel had been conceived of and pursued solely in Philippines, but the viceroy had mentioned the plan in October of 1617. Guadalcázar presented the matter as decided, with only the price still in debate.⁹¹

Japanese sources muddle the picture further. When Date learned of Hasekura's arrival in the Philippines he reported to the shogunate his intention to send a vessel down to Manila to retrieve the ambassador, and did not mention or explain the *Bautista*'s absence. Date addressed one such missive to Mukai Shōgen, the Tokugawa Admiral of the Fleet (船手奉行, *funate*

⁸⁸ DNS 12-12, CCI. Sotelo to the President of the Council of Indies, 1618.02.03.

⁸⁹ Ibid. CCXLII, Fajardo to King, 1619.8.10. This quote is taken from Blair and Robertson, and is their English translation of the Spanish original.

⁹⁰ Ibid., CCXLIII, Don Juan de Alvarado Bracamonte to the King, 1619.7.28.

⁹¹ Ibid., CCXXXVIII Viceroy to King, 1617.10.20.

bugyō) who had assisted in the approval and construction of the *Bautista*, yet made no mention of the ship.

The *Bautista*'s sale and subsequent disappearance remains perplexing, all the more so because of its uniqueness. It was one of but two Japanese ships to successfully complete a trans-Pacific voyage prior to the nineteenth century and the only one to do so multiple times.⁹² Sponsored by Date, aided by Mukai, sanctioned by the Tokugawa, and built with the help of foreign expertise, the ship represented a coalition of regional, central, and external interests. However, as Yokozawa explained to Santa Catalina, ultimately it was Date's ship, and it is difficult to grasp why the daimyo appeared to accept the sale, at a cheap price, without comment or consequence for his representatives. Even bereft of hope at the prospect of ever opening a route between New Spain and Ōshū, the ship could have been repurposed for domestic trade or sent to the ports of the China Sea, locations that did not require Spanish navigational expertise to reach. That Hasekura and Yokozawa would countenance the sale of such a prized sea-going vessel also remains difficult to understand. Whatever the case, the *Bautista* soon vanished from Spanish records as well, and was not referenced again after the discussion of its sail and readiness for Manila's defense in 1619.⁹³

The surviving record does permit some tentative speculation on the circumstances and success of the sale. Fajardo may in fact have been on quite good terms with the Japanese contingent. While still in Acapulco, he served as the godfather for the Japanese captain

⁹² The other Japanese vessel, the *Buena Ventura*, had escorted Vivero across to Acapulco four years earlier. It was also sold to the Spanish, this time in New Spain. A separate article will consider the construction and fate of these two vessels and one other in more detail.

⁹³ B&R XVIII, 250.

Yokozawa's baptism, a solemn role of diplomatic utility to both sides.⁹⁴ It is also possible Hasekura's party considered the *Bautista* lost prior to leaving New Spain. Sotelo's letter describing the pending sale, written just prior to their departure, may have simply been putting a brave face on acquiescence. The king's order to prohibit Spanish sailors on any direct return to Japan and the viceroy's decision to order a return via the Philippines as part of Fajardo's armada put the Japanese in the position of sailing between two Spanish ports, under the direction of a Spanish crew, as escort to a Spanish official. The ship and its Japanese passengers were quite literally in Spanish hands. The threat of not being able to return stood in for any explicit threat made by their hosts in New Spain or the Philippines. However, it is still probable that for whatever reason Hasekura's party agreed to the sale of their own accord. If the fear of Japanese reprisal in the Philippines was great enough to alter the tax policy of New Spain, it seems unlikely that the same officials would feel comfortable commandeering the entire ship, even under the pretense of a sale. Thus Fajardo's account of a negotiated sale, though short on specifics, was likely accurate.

There is also the possibility that Date himself was amenable to selling the ship. It may be remembered that in reporting the Spanish king's ban on foreign ships arriving in New Spain, Richard Cocks recorded that the "emperor" of Japan had issued his own parallel decree forbidding the Japanese from traveling to New Spain.⁹⁵ Cocks is the only evidence of such an edict at this time, but it is certainly true that attitudes towards missionaries and Iberians in general continued to harden after the 1614 Tokugawa prohibition against Christianity, as Santa Catalina's experiences can attest. Perhaps Date received permission for one final journey to

⁹⁴ *DNS* 12-12, CCI.

⁹⁵ *Ibid*, CCXXVI and CCXXVIII.

recover his vassal and profit from any trade, while also ferrying Santa Catalina and the king's gifts back from where they came. There is no text to this effect, and one wonders why the Tokugawa would not just send the Santa Catalina party back to New Spain via the Philippines with orders for Hasekura to return via the same route on a Spanish vessel. The *Bautista's* rough crossing and loss of cargo had already cost Date and those onboard a great deal in lost revenue. If the ship was never going to set out to New Spain again, selling it may have been the best way to recoup losses. There is no record of what cargo and monies ultimately made their way back to Ōshū, aside from gifts to Date brought back by his embassy. Neither is there a record of what sum the ship fetched in the Philippines. Beyond the mission's diplomatic failure, the economic benefits of the *Bautista's* voyages, if any, remain difficult to ascertain. Date's willingness to part with the ship in the face of dimming prospects would explain his representatives' agreeing to sell it, but for now remains squarely in the realm of speculation.

Finally, it is possible that the Japanese contingent parted with the ship as a last-ditch effort to demonstrate their goodwill and keep alive some dim hope that Philip might permit trade between Date's "kingdom" and New Spain. This aligns with Sotelo's aforementioned account in his 1618 letter to the Council of Indies. Selling the means to conduct that trade might seem counterintuitive, but if Philip opened the gates, new ships might have been built, and not all the ships needed to be Japanese. Certainly, Fajardo appreciated the extra galleon in the midst of efforts to secure Manila and counter Dutch aggression. Date's representatives selling their ship to help Spain combat the Dutch threat might have been a strategy to further differentiate between the wroth "emperor" of Japan, rumored to be susceptible to Dutch influence, and the alternative presented by the more friendly and tolerant northern daimyo. Such an explanation accounts for

the bargain price Fajardo reported, but would also mean that Date's embassy sacrificed their ship for the sake of the relationship it was meant to make possible.

Whether or not the *Bautista* was sold as part of such a gambit, its fate was sealed upon its departure from Acapulco, as was the fate of any further trade between Japan and New Spain. In this, the viceroy was both agent and prophet. The *Bautista* spent over a year in port, during which time Guadalcázar granted its passengers the privilege of customs-free trade while denying them a crew, destination, and in time, the vessel itself. His final report to Philip on the matter is telling. Having received the monarch's instructions on what to do in the event any other Japanese vessel arrived, the viceroy reported back with his compliance. But he was not overly concerned about enforcement. Guadalcázar told his king that he would do as was asked, "however for now I think that this correspondence [between Japan and New Spain] is closed."⁹⁶ No other Japanese vessel would set out to cross the Pacific for over two hundred years.

Conclusion

Spanish officials adhered to a policy that sought balance between obstruction and outright rejection when resolving the problems posed by the *Bautista*. The Japanese vessel and its passengers pressed the issue of a more open Pacific at a time when the contours and dynamic of a putatively Spanish Lake were still being debated. That debate, however, remained internal. Montesclaros and his contemporaries were discussing how best to exploit a closed system of imperial nodes for the monarchy's benefit. Sotelo's voice and Date's mission remained the perspective of the minority. The crown opted against any fundamental restructuring of the relations among Macau, Manila, and Acapulco and their economic and logistical role in the Indies, which held until the restoration of an independent Portuguese crown in 1640. Handling

⁹⁶ 12-12, CCXL, 1619.5.25. "[A]unque por agora entiendo questá zerrada esta correspondencia."

the *Bautista* required resisting Japanese efforts to pry open Spain's closed circuit across the Pacific while maintaining the archipelago's established relationship with that circuit.

Guadalcázar's decisions and correspondence reflected these priorities. The final customs decision evinced concern for protecting existing relations. The viceroy framed the decision as a response to Valdes' petition, as a decision rendered for the benefit of the Manila settlement. Tariff policy in Acapulco preserved Manila's commerce and security in East Asia. The Keichō Embassy's role in New Spain paralleled its ineffectiveness in Europe, provoking policy debate with its presence but unable to wield much direct influence. Hasekura and Sotelo warned of the "emperor's" anger in order to drive the Spanish towards Date, but the threat of Tokugawa displeasure instead drove them away from the daimyo and his ship.

The viceroy granted the tariff exemption in the hopes of protecting Manila from retaliation and preserving its place in Asian trade; his supplemental decisions regarding sailors, the *Bautista*'s route, and the vessel itself prevented Japanese expansion. Denying Date's ship Spanish sailors withheld personnel and knowledge that Spain might thereby retain exclusive control over. The crown and its lieutenants undercut any future voyages by refusing the technology transfer necessary to the endeavor. The dominoes fell from there. Dependent on Spanish mariners, the *Bautista* had to go where Spaniards could go, necessitating a crossing to the Philippines rather than Japan. The route to the Philippines also served as silent rebuke, avoiding the route the vessel's sponsor had hoped to open. Finally, the ship changed hands, halting Japanese forays into the Pacific and serving Spain's military needs against the Dutch. Collectively, these decisions removed the means to Japanese expansion without having to directly decry that project.

The *Bautista*'s second sojourn in New Spain capped a multi-year effort by the Spanish monarchy and its officials to ward off unwanted encroachment from Tokugawa Japan. Guadalcázar successfully closed off the East Pacific, and Spain remained committed to a *status quo* preserving Manila as the fulcrum of Asia-America exchange and the gatekeeper to trade with the Japanese archipelago.

But Tokugawa Japan did not yet have a *status quo*, as leadership experimented with the geographical, conceptual, and material function of foreign commerce. Relations with the Spanish Philippines were inherited, not established, and were subject to change. Japanese leadership looked to organize its economic relations in the proprietary manner that polities often do, and with each year found less and less reason to engage their Spanish counterparts. The monarchy's unofficial final offer did not amount to much: keep the eastern Pacific closed, keep the western Pacific open, and embrace a missionary population that the shogunate had already moved to expel. That Guadalcázar thought the Tokugawa might acquiesce to Spain's vision of trans-Pacific relations suggests the widening distance between expectations on either side of the ocean.

Decisions in New Spain also sent the Keichō Embassy to Manila, a place its members never intended to go. By the time Sotelo and Hasekura arrived in the Philippines in 1618, the duo had devoted half a decade to the possibility of strengthening ties between the monarchy and the shogunate. They arrived at the primary site of existing Japanese-Spanish relations for the previous half century. In Manila the actual and potential became enmeshed, and as the latter wound down the former fell apart. The Tokugawa would retaliate, not through crippling taxes, but by deciding the Spanish were no longer worth the trouble.

The Acapulco-Manila connection Guadalcázar and his peers worked to preserve is often thought of as the last link in a chain that enabled a truly global economy. Chains connect, but

they also constrict. The *Bautista*'s crossings and their wider context demonstrate how one prominent link in the global economy depended on strictly controlled space. Tokugawa Japan sustained two decades of considerable and consistent diplomatic and economic investment in opening up that space. Spain wanted to preserve a silver thread across the ocean; for a time Japan offered the alternative of a trans-Pacific network operating across polities. The Spanish never monopolized the Pacific, but the "global trade" they facilitated via that ocean derived from the maintenance of accepted networks within one political entity rather than the intensification of relations across multiple polities. These efforts ensured that the ocean remained a barrier, not a conduit, to formal diplomatic and commercial ties not premised on exploitation or colonization the rest of the century and beyond. The voyages of the *Bautista* suggest how European "expansion" in the early modern world could be tinged an insularity all its own.

5. Lost at Sea: The Aftermath of the Keichō Embassy

It is difficult to diagram correspondence between Tokugawa Japan and Habsburg Spain. Letters, representatives, and vessels moved among nodes in a manner too complex and haphazard to support the binary implied by “Japanese-Spanish relations.” Thus, for example, in 1614 Alonso Muñoz petitioned the monarchy to return to Japan, Santa Catalina and his companions stalled in New Spain, Hasekura and Sotelo arrived in Acapulco, and Vizcaíno returned to the Americas embittered and embroiled in conflict with his shipmates.

Communication between these two composite hierarchies functioned like sonar. Two poles of authority—Edo and Madrid—sent pulses across the ocean in the form of letters, representatives, and vessels. Each pole did so to orient themselves and locate interlocutors, to navigate relations. This communication never functioned as a simple call and response. Either pole might send another pulse before receiving a reply to the first. Hence, Ieyasu permitted Date to dispatch the *Bautista* before hearing back from Philip. Additionally, each pulse might produce ripples of its own, as when Salinas sent Vizcaíno to Japan independent of Madrid’s counsel.

These ripples spread and generated their own effects even as the two apex authorities moved on, much in the way ripples move across a pond long after the rock dropped in sinks to the bottom. Intermediaries found themselves solving problems that no longer existed. Guadalcázar adopted measures to impede future Japanese traffic to Acapulco even as the Tokugawa abandoned further investment in the enterprise. Edo and Madrid foreclosed the possibility of relations across the Pacific by the close of 1615, well before the pulses traveling between dissipated. Philip ruled against direct commerce prior to meeting Hasekura, yet Date’s retainer traveled on to Rome before embarking on the long route home. Ieyasu knew Santa

Catalina had little to offer soon after the friar's arrival, but Date sent the *Bautista* out once more. It took a full decade for the water to be still.

This final chapter explores how intermediaries reacted to the fallout from their superiors. This fallout entails more than the Keichō Embassy's return. It also touches upon the end of direct contact between the Japanese archipelago and the Philippines Islands, despite Manila's best efforts. Vizcaíno had prioritized a search for mythical islands of gold and silver over realizing the potential of trade between Japan and New Spain; a decade later the unwinding of that potential relationship helped sever the very real link between the Philippines and the archipelago. For a decade, Manila had acted as the principal intermediary between the shogunate and the monarchy, but it had never proved capable of mediating the demands of its colonial superior and its powerful neighbor.

After 1609, negotiations between the two composite polities occurred over Manila's head, and in 1618 the islands struggled with how to respond when Guadalcázar sent the human and material detritus of that aborted encounter—the *Bautista*, Hasekura, and Sotelo—to the Philippines. Date's previously inseparable representatives took very different paths back to Japan, while Manila mounted its own campaign to preserve relations with the Tokugawa. Here again, the Spanish settlement proved unable to bridge the gap.

Sonar can be used to communicate, but the shogunate and the monarchy never managed to communicate effectively with each other. Sonar can also be used get one's bearings, to understand one's surroundings, to explore the depths. In these respects, the Tokugawa shogunate did what it needed to do. It spent the opening decades of the seventeenth century literally testing the waters. Sounding out Spain was an important part of this process, and by the 1620s the Tokugawa had gotten their bearings in East Asia sufficiently to make a decision, even one as

final as severing ties. Conversely, though Spain warded off advances into the eastern Pacific, it had to reconcile itself to losing a valuable relationship on the western shores of that same ocean.

The remnants of the Keichō Embassy arrived in Manila as part of the flotilla escorting the new governor-general Alonso Fajardo de Entenza in August 1618. Fajardo soon after took the *Bautista* off the party's hands, leaving Hasekura and Sotelo in Manila without Date's ship. Their principal duty now seemed to be getting back to the daimyo in Sendai, however disappointing their news. But this proposition proved complicated, especially for the ever zealous Sotelo. Circumstance and disposition held both men in Manila for multiple years, but in time their paths diverged.

The duo arrived at an unsettled juncture. The 1614 Tokugawa prohibition against Christianity presaged an unraveling of the relationship between the Philippines and Japan, but did not bring about swift and total change. At the close of 1614 the shogunate forced a number of missionaries to depart out of Nagasaki, but at least a few dozen chose to go into hiding. Still more continued to enter surreptitiously, often from Manila, such that the number of missionaries in Japan probably rebounded following their initial culling in 1614.¹ Missionaries fleeing Edo and exiled Japanese Catholics also moved north, growing the church throughout the northeast region of Japan, Sendai included.

Trade between Manila and the ports of Kyushu also continued. *Shuin* vessels traveled to Manila until 1624. The population of Manila's Japanese settlements grew throughout the second

¹ Drawing primarily on Jesuit sources, Jurgis Elisonas records that forty-seven missionaries refused to leave in 1614, twenty-seven of them Jesuits. By 1621 the number of Jesuits active in Japan grew to thirty-six, with members of other orders undoubtedly entering Japan as well. See Elisonas, "Christianity and the Daimyo," in Vol. 4 of *The Cambridge History of Japan*, eds. John Whitney Hall and James L. McClain (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 368.

decade of the century, peaking around 3000.² Their numbers prompted the *procurador* of Manila to call for the expulsion of all Japanese from the settlement in a 1919 memorial to Philip III.³ Yet Manila continued to import provisions from Japan, including basic foodstuffs such as wheat and biscuits, into the 1620s.⁴ The ambivalent status of relations encompassed a disjointed mix of necessary provisions, unwanted missionaries, sanctioned trading passes, and disquiet over resident populations.

Unease with Japan intermingled with the direct threat of Dutch incursions. Despite the truce active in Europe, conflict between the Spanish Habsburgs and the Low Countries escalated in the East Indies. In 1616, Governor-General Juan de Silva mustered a large Spanish fleet in Asia to beat back the Dutch, but the expedition ended in disaster. Meant to coordinate with Portuguese force in Melaka, upon arrival the Spaniards learned that the Dutch had already dispatched their Iberian allies. Fever struck the fleet as it returned to Manila, claiming the governor-general's life.⁵ A year later, the second battle of Playa Honda repulsed Dutch ships near Manila but at a loss of multiple Spanish vessels.⁶ Silva's replacement as governor-general, Fajardo, had originally been tapped to lead a large flotilla from Spain to the Philippines via the

² Iwao Seiichi, *Shuinsen to Nihon-machi* (Tokyo: Shibundō, 1962), 111–12.

³ “Petición de Ríos Coronel sobre necesidades de las Filipinas,” 1619. AGI,FILIPINAS,27,N.108 (Item 38).

⁴ Birgit Tremml-Werner, *Spain, China and Japan in Manila, 1571-1644: Local Comparisons and Global Connections* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2015), 249; citing Iwao Seiichi, *Nan'yō Nihon-machi no kenkyū* (Tokyo: Minami Ajia Bunka Kenkyūjo, 1941), 338.

⁵ Arturo Giráldez, *The Age of Trade: The Manila Galleons and the Dawn of the Global Economy* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2015), 95.

⁶ Ruurdje Laarhoven and Elizabeth Pino Wittermans, “From Blockade to Trade: Early Dutch Relations with Manila, 1600–1750,” *Philippine Studies* 33, no. 4 (1985): 490.

Cape route and succor Portuguese and Spanish forces in the East Indies.⁷ The monarchy scuttled this ambitious plan by spring 1617, and so it was that Fajardo crossed the Pacific together with a vessel from an unknown lord in northern Japan.⁸ These setbacks fueled ongoing anxiety about insufficient military resources. Writing in 1618, a Jesuit in Manila complained that the islands had been waiting twenty years for the monarchy to send sufficient ships, to no avail.⁹ A renewed Dutch blockade of Manila that year brought military deficiencies to the forefront, as well as giving further urgency to Fajardo's purchase of the *Bautista*. That the Dutch purportedly permitted red-seal vessels under the shogunate's protection to skirt the blockade spoke to the VOC's healthy respect for the Tokugawa while also raising alarm in Manila about the growing Dutch foothold in Japan.¹⁰

Leadership in Manila must have met Date's embassy with trepidation. The group claimed the diplomatic sanction of Japan and returned to Asia with the courtesy—if not the concessions—of Manila's supreme secular and religious authorities. If they were not immediately ill at ease, a certain member of the daimyo's representatives soon gave them reason to be. As in Europe before, Luis Sotelo left a larger documentary footprint than his Japanese counterpart, and these sources reveal that Manila did not know quite what to do with a friar once again obscuring the source and sanction of the authority he claimed.

⁷ AGI,FILIPINAS,340,L.3,F.138V-140R. The flotilla was to consist of 1,600 infantrymen, eight galleons, two caravels, and a patache, a substantial investment in the military capacity of the Philippines.

⁸ Philip notified Guadalcázar of the change in plans in a March 1617 letter. See AGI,FILIPINAS,329,L.2,242RV. Fajardo, originally meant to depart as the captain of the armada, was repurposed to serve as governor-general following the death of his predecessor. See for example, AGI,FILIPINAS,200,N.215, which comments on Fajardo's new appointment.

⁹ "Carta del Jesuita Juan de Ribera sobre situación estratégica," 1618.12.02. AGI,FILIPINAS,20,R.12,N.80.

¹⁰ Adam Clulow notes that the VOC let a *shuin* vessel pass the blockade in November 1618, a few months after Hasekura and Sotelo's arrival in the city. See Clulow, *The Company and the Shogun: The Dutch Encounter with Tokugawa Japan* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2014), 146.

Maneuvering in Manila

Sotelo flummoxed his compatriots and fellow mendicants in Manila. Secular and religious leaders in the Philippines respected his experience, but worried about the strength of his zeal and the scope of his ambition. They also chafed at his grandiose claims to papal sanction and leadership over the mission in Japan. Once again, Sotelo summoned just enough credibility to draw attention but not enough to merit trust. The friar spent four years in the Philippines, consumed with returning to Japan. The Tokugawa prohibition complicated a return, though missionaries had flouted the ban by entering the archipelago through subterfuge. In addition to Tokugawa hostility, Manila officialdom also ardently opposed the Sotelo's return. Its assessment of his motivations and potential varied, but the vast majority agreed that the friar had no business going to Japan.

Letters from Manila suggest officials there could not decide what to do with the friar, mirroring the struggle to establish a coherent policy toward Japan. After warding off Sotelo's quick return in 1618, authorities passed an ambivalent four years curtailing his activity, requesting his expulsion, and recommending his talents. The friar began ministering to Manila's considerable Japanese population, and by summer 1619 he oversaw an unauthorized seminary for Japanese residents. A Jesuit account from July reported that Fajardo and the Archbishop of Manila together removed the friar from his makeshift enterprise and confined him to a monastery.¹¹ In contrast to this rebuke, that same month the Bishop of Zebu (today's Cebu)—a settlement almost 600 kilometers south of Manila—wrote Philip to recommend Sotelo be

¹¹ DNS 12-12, CCXLVII. This information comes from an excerpt of a Jesuit report on events in the Philippines from July 1618–July 1619.

consecrated as the bishop of eastern Japan.¹² Monastery life did not bring an end to Sotelo's maneuvering. Two years later, the Archbishop of Manila wrote the king of Spain (now Philip IV, r. 1621–1665) warning of Sotelo's ill-advised desire to re-enter Japan and requested his apprehension and removal from the Philippines. The following year the Archbishop adopted the language of career adjustment rather than expulsion, writing that "[it] seems to me that [Sotelo] has aspects and the capacity to serve Your Majesty in any prelacy, as long as it is not in Japan."¹³

Sotelo justified his actions in the Philippines by claiming papal support for assuming the title and responsibilities of bishop. Following the embassy's audience in Rome, Pope Paul V had recommended the friar to the Spanish throne as a candidate for bishop of eastern Japan, should such a position be created. Philip's Council of the Indies had tabled the issue earlier when Sotelo had earlier made the same request in Spain, and the pope's letter did not change any minds.

Even if the Council of Indies had been sympathetic, installing an additional bishop in Japan required navigating the agendas of the papacy, the crown of Spain, and the crown of Portugal. The papacy conceded the right to nominate bishops in the Indies to the crowns of Castile and Portugal, a prerogative the Castilian crown jealously guarded and expanded throughout the sixteenth century.¹⁴ Thus the pope could recommend Sotelo but could not install him independent of the monarchy's approval.

In addition, although the Spanish Habsburgs held the crowns of Castile and Portugal concurrently, they ruled them separately.¹⁵ Philip II established this precedent upon taking the

¹² Bishop of Cebu to Philip III, 1619.07.30. AGI,FILIPINAS,76,N.10.

¹³ For the 1621 letter, see *DNS* 12-12, CCLI. For the 1622 letter, doc. CCLII.

¹⁴ This appointment system was called the *patronato real*, ("royal patronage") in Spain.

¹⁵ Present-day Spain was a composite of kingdoms, including the crowns of Castile and León, as well as the Kingdom of Aragon.

title of King of Portugal in 1580, and his successors continued to honor that principle.

Portuguese and Spanish activities in Japan illustrated the complications stemming from the administrative divide. Portugal, not Spain, nominated the bishops of Japan, and uniformly nominated Jesuits.¹⁶

The rivalry between Jesuits aligned with Portugal and mendicant orders, including Franciscans, aligned with Spain mirrored tensions between Portuguese and Spanish commercial ambitions in the East Indies. In 1615, Philip III's councilors worried that Jesuit and Portuguese interests would protest the establishment of a second bishopric through Spanish Franciscan channels. Coupled with the instability in Japan and insufficient trust in Date and his representatives, Philip and his advisors had no qualm deflecting Sotelo's request to appoint additional bishops in Japan, citing the need for more complete information and for consultation with the Council of Portugal.¹⁷

The pope's half-hearted and largely ineffectual recommendation did little to discourage Sotelo three years later and half a world away in the Philippines. Instead, he used Paul V's conditional endorsement to justify a return to Japan and to legitimize his missionary outreach in and around Manila. The 1619 Jesuit report described Sotelo ordaining significant numbers of Japanese at his makeshift seminary, "though we do not know with what title, nor with what authority."¹⁸ The friar's efforts advanced to the point that he had taken over a house, installed a church bell, and was giving mass before the Governor-General and Archbishop stopped him.¹⁹

¹⁶ This followed a 1575 papal bull declaring Japan a part of the Macao—i.e., a Portuguese-controlled—diocese.

¹⁷ Consulta del Consejo de Indias, 1615.04.02. Chapter 3 discusses Sotelo's various requests in more depth.

¹⁸ *DNS* 12-12, CCXLVII.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

Regarding Japan, Sotelo evidently intended to return as bishop, papal representative, and commissioner general of the Franciscans.²⁰ The last title conferred leadership over the Franciscan order in Japan. Assuming he could make it back to Japan, Sotelo's claimed titles would have made him the principal figure in the Japanese Catholic Church outside Kyushu and the Portuguese-Jesuit orbit. These tireless efforts to promote himself and his vision of the Japan mission prompted consternation and censure, but nobody in Manila succeeded in dissuading Sotelo or sending him away. Ultimately, despite widespread agreement that the friar could not return to Japan, Sotelo managed to do just that in fall 1622.

Manila's inability to check the friar effectively stemmed in part from Sotelo's penchant for obfuscating and exaggerating his relationship to authority. The friar's checkered history with leaders in both Japan and Spain raised concerns but probably insulated him from more-direct reprisals. By 1618, Sotelo was a dozen-year veteran of missionary work in the Philippines and Japan, and a central figure in a seven-year mission to the heart of Catholic Europe. He may have been the only person then alive—and perhaps the only person in history—to receive an audience with the shogun of Japan, the king of Spain, and the pope, giving him more direct experience with the Philippines' Castilian overlords, papal superiors, and Japanese neighbors than anyone else on the islands.²¹

His escapades served as a rhetorical cudgel for his critics while shielding the friar from those same detractors. A 1618 memorial to Philip III blamed Sotelo for the diplomatic morass

²⁰ Archbishop of Manila to King of Spain, 1621.07.30. *DNS* 12-12, CCLI. See also a 1618 memorial to Philip (*DNS* 12-12, CCXLVI). Cited below, which complained of Sotelo's pretensions and the danger of his ambitions.

²¹ Hasekura does not appear to have ever been received by either Tokugawa Ieyasu or Hidetada. The friar Alonso Muñoz and the Japanese merchant Itami Sōmi are potential exceptions, though neither were as central as Sotelo at each juncture. If Muñoz ever met with the pope, he did not do so as part of a delegation from Japan. Similarly, while the Tokugawa shogunate issued a *shuin* trading pass to Itami prior to Date's mission, it is unclear if Itami ever met Ieyasu or Hidetada.

with Japan, the 1613 martyrdoms in Edo stemming from his church activity, and Japanese interest in large, ocean-going vessels.²² This document started the trend of calling for Sotelo's detention in or expulsion from the Philippines, as well as advising explicitly against the friar's return to Japan. It also demonstrates Manila leadership's reluctance to defuse the situation on its own. Philip III and the viceroy Guadalcázar had sent Sotelo and Hasekura to Manila without providing guidance on what to do with them. Sotelo arrived with no clear mandate from the crown, and his plan to return to Japan risked antagonizing its Tokugawa rulers. Manila residents were right to be skeptical. But the friar did carry replies, however empty, for Date, and he correctly claimed the pope's endorsement, however ineffectual it was in practice. Cognizant of Sotelo's various connections, leadership in the Philippines sought resolution higher up the chain of command. This hesitancy exacted a price, necessitating a multiple-year wait for a reply with no guarantee of a definitive solution. In the meantime, Sotelo remained in the Philippines, probing for a path back to Japan.

The Philippines' ambivalent reaction to Sotelo echoed the islands' unenviable position vis-à-vis Spain and Japan: occupying the front lines of the existing relationship but possessing limited input on its overall direction. Manila relied on imported Japanese provisions, while economic exchange with and among Japanese and Chinese merchants formed the city's livelihood. In the spiritual realm, decades of evangelization had fostered an extensive Christian community in Japan that continued to draw missionaries from the Philippines. Following the 1614 prohibition, Manila became a refuge for Japanese Christians who refused apostasy,

²² Memorial Presented to the King of Spain [1618]. *DNS* 12-12, CCXLVI. It will be remembered that Sotelo established a chapel in Edo in 1613 despite a Tokugawa prohibition against missionary activities and churches in the shogunal lands. The Tokugawa executed all involved except Sotelo, who was saved due to Date's intervention.

including the Kyushu Christian daimyos Takayama Ukon and Naitō Tadatōshi.²³ But economic activity and evangelical opportunity went hand in hand with the threat of military invasion, commercial withdrawal, and local outbreaks of violence and insurrection against outnumbered Spaniards. Similar concerns about illicit shipping and effective administrative control spurred official limits—always difficult to enforce—on the number of Japanese ships allowed in port from the time of Ieyasu’s first letters.²⁴

Manila similarly found itself underwater diplomatically, unauthorized to address Japanese commercial expansion and apprehensive about being cut out of negotiations between its neighbors to the north and superiors in Mexico and Madrid. Date’s enterprise and Sotelo’s journey stemmed indirectly from the Philippines’ inability to meet Tokugawa demands for trade near Edo and direct commerce with New Spain. From 1614 onward, Manila’s missionaries confronted a growing Tokugawa intolerance that it could subvert but not deter.

While the prospect of truly trans-Pacific ties unraveled in the audience chambers of Edo, Madrid, and Rome, Japan’s growing mistrust of missionary intent and influence threatened the very real commercial exchange that had existed between the Spanish Philippines and Japan in some form or another since Manila’s establishment in 1571.²⁵ Guidance and material support from Spain arrived sporadically, leaving Spanish settlements in the Philippines caught between the incompatible priorities of powerful neighbors and distant superiors. Sotelo’s presence brought these tensions to the surface: the desire for trade, the missionary impulse, the monarchy’s ambivalent response to Japan, the papacy’s limited prerogatives in the Indies, and

²³ Tremml-Werner, *Spain, China, and Japan in Manila*, 303.

²⁴ See Chapter 1 for more detail.

²⁵ Tremml-Werner’s *Spain, China, and Japan in Manila* analyzes the development and characteristics of this “Manila System.”

the personal agendas of the intermediaries moving between the nodes of these composite polities. The Philippines' inability to mediate between Edo and Madrid contrasts with internal political dynamics in Japan, where the Tokugawa permitted Date to be an intermediary to the Spanish.

In fall 1622, the friar made good on his promise to return to the one place very few wanted him to go.²⁶ That October Sotelo found passage to Japan on a Chinese junk. He departed disguised as a layman, together with a Japanese priest and a Japanese youth from the monastery in Manila. By this time few captains were willing to smuggle missionaries into Japan, and there were reports that some missionaries played the part of merchants in Manila for days on end in order to secure passage.²⁷

The voyage to Japan went well enough, but little else did. The ship arrived in Satsuma on Kyushu and the crew learned of the recent martyrdom of two other missionaries and a Japanese ship captain. The ill tidings spooked the Chinese crew, who resolved to hand over the three to the magistrate in Nagasaki. Likely the crew was already on edge, for six years earlier the Tokugawa had mandated that all foreign trade be conducted in the ports of Hirado and Nagasaki.²⁸ The ship's initial docking in Satsuma meant that the junk was skirting sanctioned trade, and suggests that Satsuma domain remained complicit in commerce outside of approved Tokugawa channels.²⁹ Another friar's efforts to get the trio off the Chinese junk failed, and they were

²⁶ Unless otherwise noted, the following account of Sotelo's return to Japan is taken from Léon Pagès, *Histoire de la religion chrétienne au Japon*, Book II, excerpted as *DNS* 12-12, CCLIII and *SDS*, docs. 354 & 362. The original is in French; I have drawn on the French and a Japanese translation in *SDS* for the summation here.

²⁷ Archbishop of Manila to the King of Spain, *DNS* 12-12, CCLI.

²⁸ Michael S. Laver, *The Sakoku Edicts and the Politics of Tokugawa Hegemony* (Amherst: Cambria Press, 2011), 70.

²⁹ Robert Hellyer explores the interplay and tension between the shogunate and Satsuma domain over the scope and scale of foreign trade throughout the Tokugawa period in *Defining Engagement: Japan and Global Contexts, 1640-1868* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2009).

arrested and brought before the Nagasaki Magistrate. Sotelo, no doubt prepared for this scenario, declared himself to be Date Masamune's messenger returning with a reply from the king of Spain, and requested that the "Emperor" (Tokugawa Hidetada) be advised of his return. But Tokugawa law was unambiguous about missionaries in the country, and Sotelo's freedom was forfeit. The magistrate imprisoned Sotelo and his two Japanese companions in the nearby village of Ōmura, and once again Sotelo needed Date to get him out of jail.

The Bautista Fades Away

Apart from the men and letters it carried, the *San Juan Bautista* was an important intermediary in its own right. Guadalcázar had already marked the vessel for purchase; now it was left to Fajardo to execute orders. The viceroy had denied the vessel its own route. By making the *Bautista* part of the governor-general's flotilla he also remanded the vessel into Spanish custody. Fajardo made the *de facto* the *de jure* when he purchased the ship from its Japanese caretakers. However, Fajardo did not purchase the vessel from its owner; nor with the owner's knowledge and consent. Date remained silent on the matter after Hasekura's return, apparently acquiescing to the loss of his singular ship without protest as the Tokugawa had before him.

The diplomatic calculus in 1618 differed from what it had been earlier in the decade. Spanish diplomatic actors, formal and *ad hoc* alike, had provided cover to previous Japanese voyages and vessels: Vivero in 1610, Vizcaino in 1613, Santa Catalina in 1616. The preceding all traveled eastward from Japan. In the one instance in which Spanish authorities countenanced a Japanese vessel to cross westward from New Spain to Japan, Santa Catalina and his party were aboard with Philip III's official responses to Ieyasu and Hidetada.³⁰ Even then, the monarchy

³⁰ Vizcaino sailed directly from New Spain to Japan in 1611, but on a Spanish vessel, the *San Francisco*.

had ineffectually ordered Spanish crewman aboard not to return to Acapulco via the archipelago. When the *Bautista* looked to depart Acapulco a second time in 1618, there were no Spanish representatives to send to Japan, but Fajardo needed to travel to Manila.

Separate from any symbolic value, it is difficult to pin down the economic loss incurred by Japanese actors as a result of the vessel's sale. Clearly Date lost his ship, and Fajardo's contention that he acquired the *Bautista* "at a cheap price" suggests Yokozawa and Hasekura took a financial loss as well.³¹ It is also unclear if Fajardo paid in cash, kind, or a combination of the two. But the ship also carried cargo, and Pacific storms may have been as damaging as Spanish protectionism. Back in New Spain, loss of cargo due to inclement weather factored into Japanese arguments against customs levies.³² The extent of these losses may have been overstated, but everyone agreed that the crossing from Japan to New Spain had been harrowing. Quantifying damage to cargo on the outbound journey is not possible with extant sources, but whatever cargo Japanese merchants possessed upon reaching Manila remained theirs to do with as they pleased. Date mentioned these merchants in his second batch of letters and even described his vessels as a "trading ship" (商船, *shōsen*); presumably some of these merchants traded on the daimyo's behalf.

The allowances awarded to Hasekura and Yokozawa by the viceroy complemented the funds from sale of the ship and cargo. Guadalcázar had allotted 8,000 pesos to the "captain" Yokozawa and 12,000 pesos to Hasekura for securing provisions, and presumably goods, in Manila. By comparison, Gil cites Guadalcázar's predecessor Salinas buying the *San Buena*

³¹ Governor-General of the Philippines to Philip III, 1619.08.10. *DNS* 12-12, CCXLII. Fajardo describes buying from "the Japanese," making it unclear who actually sold the ship, or how exactly the proceeds were used.

³² As argued by Sotelo and Hasekura on behalf of Yokozawa's crew. See Chapter 4 for more details.

Ventura for 7,000 pesos in 1610. These gift allowances may have helped offset the cost of the ship. They might also be seen as the accepted cost of getting the Japanese out of the Pacific.

For Date and his subordinates, the sale was likely unwanted but also unsurprising. The dimming prospect of trade with New Spain similarly weakened the case for maintaining the *Bautista*. Without the promise of Spanish vessels harboring in his domain Date was isolated; integrating Sendai into existing foreign commercial networks to the southwest would have been costly and complicated. Furthermore, both Date and the Tokugawa understood their dependence on Spanish navigational expertise. No ship had crossed the Pacific without the aid of a Spanish crew, and at all levels the Spanish monarchy remained protective of its knowledge. Japanese sailors would have acquired sufficient skill in time, however reticent their tutors, but in 1618 there was neither enough time nor a welcoming destination. Furthermore, the Spanish had established a precedent by purchasing the *San Buena Ventura* in 1610. Still, the Japanese contingent did not appear happy to part with its vessel. Fajardo noted that the sale had been made grudgingly, and while Guadalcázar and Sotelo mentioned selling the vessel to the Spaniards while the *Bautista* remained in New Spain, there is no mention of a Japanese agent suggesting the idea. Sotelo may have just been putting a positive spin on a *fait accompli*.

Despite the loss of his ship in Manila, Date's response demonstrated more concern for his standing with the shogunate and replies from Europe than with the vessel that enabled the daimyo to act as an intermediary between the two. In October 1618 Date received word of the *Bautista*'s return and two days later reported developments to Mukai Shōgen, his longtime collaborator in the shogunate.³³ Date's missive contained grim news and a request. Mukai's

³³ Date Masamune to Mukai Shōgen, 1618.10.11. *SDS*, docs. 327 & 328. *SDS* excerpts versions from two Date house records, the *Masamune-kun kiroku inshōki* (doc. 327) and *Date chike kiroku* (doc. 328). The remaining summary in this paragraph draws on these sources.

retainers had died on the outward journey to New Spain, a potentially delicate matter to bring up given that Date's chief representatives survived. Because news from Manila had to pass by Edo to get to Sendai, Date may have reported information that Mukai already knew. Secondly, Date asked to send a ship to Manila to pick up his representatives and to fetch the letters they carried. The daimyo addressed the *Bautista* by omission; the need for another vessel implied that Date's galleon was no longer available. He never directly commented on the vessel's sale. Date's appeal provides more evidence for the collaborative nature of the Keichō Embassy, especially with regard to the journeys and status of the *Bautista*. Date weathered the loss of his ship with little comment; now he wished to hear the tidings from his representatives, and as we shall see, perhaps wanted to hear from one more than the other.

The *Bautista* faded quickly from the Spanish record. In summer 1619, Fajardo counted the vessel among Manila's four ships large enough to defend the settlement against continued Dutch provocation.³⁴ The vessel is not mentioned again. But the lack of comment on the ships—*Buena Ventura*, *Sebastian* and *Bautista* alike—should not drown out the statement made by their construction. The three vessels built by Tokugawa and Date were the most sustained investment in trans-Pacific commerce outside of Spain prior to the eighteenth century, and perhaps the only such investment prior to the nineteenth century not premised on piracy, extraction of natural resources, or exploitation of other societies.³⁵ The stories of these vessels exhibit both the depth of early Tokugawa commitment to trade with New Spain and the resolve of Spanish

³⁴ Alonso Fajardo to Philip III, 1619.08.10. *B&R* XVIII, 250.

³⁵ Russian expansion into the northern Pacific fur trade depended on the exploitation of indigenous peoples, while Cook's voyages farther south focused on exploration and scientific study rather than establishing sustained trade. Later American ventures centered around whaling, the fur trade, and in time, trade with China and Japan. For a recent overview of the field of Pacific history see Matt K. Matsuda, "The Pacific," *The American Historical Review* 111, no. 3 (2006): 758–80.

administrators to foreclose the possibility. The early Tokugawa vision of trade and diplomacy extended to the coast of the Americas, while the monarchy's vision of its empire continued to prioritize the monopolization of sea lanes between its disparate territories and the flow of goods and people among them.

“Strange Tales” and Foreign Portraiture: Hasekura Comes Home

In his 1893 account of Date Masamune and the Keichō Embassy, the historian Colyer Meriwether could not account for Hasekura's whereabouts between the representative's departure from Italy in 1615 and his return to Sendai in 1620, but doubted that the omission mattered. “Nothing of importance seems to have occurred [from 1615 to 1620], or at least there are no records accessible that give more than the bare statement of their [the embassy party's] return. They must have been delayed at some place, as they discharged the purpose of their mission at Rome in the latter part of 1615, and yet Hasekura does not arrive at Sendai until Aug. 1620.”³⁶ The intervening years have yielded more historical sources, notably on Hasekura and Sotelo's second sojourn in New Spain. However, the return journey remains less documented, and Hasekura remains a taciturn figure. His near-silence echoes the sparse record of events left by Date and Tokugawa leadership, in contrast to the reports, memorials, deliberations, and proclamations generated by Spanish officialdom in reaction to successive waves of Japanese outreach. Actions may speak louder than words, but Spain left most of the words historians use to frame the actions of Japanese leadership.

However, it was never Hasekura's role to chronicle, petition, or speak to begin with. If the embassy “discharged its purpose” in Europe, that purpose required Hasekura's presence, not

³⁶ C. Meriwether, “A Sketch of the Life of Date Masamune and an Account of His Embassy to Rome,” *Transactions of the Asiatic Society of Japan* 21 (November 1893), 53. An American employed by the Meiji government, Meriwether (1858–1920) was stationed in Sendai, historical home of the Keichō Embassy, in 1889–1892.

his eloquence. Date spoke for himself, penning letters to the secular and religious leadership of the Spanish monarchy and the Catholic Church. The daimyo was downright verbose compared to earlier Tokugawa efforts. Additionally, although Date mentioned Japanese messengers, he entrusted on-the-ground communication to Sotelo. Hasekura served as substitute rather than spokesman. Tokugawa Ieyasu dispatched Muñoz to deliver a license, while Date sent a retainer to embody his conviction and commitment. Hasekura performed this duty many times over: in his audience with Philip III, at his baptism in Madrid, during his procession into Rome, and in his encounters with Paul V. These actions “worked” insofar as European authorities understood the value of Hasekura’s presence and integrated him into local contexts of authority, prestige, and presentation. Hasekura’s contributions were based on corporeal symbolism rather than direct negotiation or repeated petition. Occasional memorials and letters do appear with Hasekura’s seal and signature. At times, he appended his mark to European-language letters drafted by others. In those few instances when Hasekura sent letters in Japanese, they almost always traveled together with memorials from Sotelo, and the retainer echoed the sentiments of the friar. Observers in Spain and Rome commented approvingly on Hasekura’s bearing, but this personal approval never translated into tangible benefits for Hasekura’s lord.

To his European audience, Date’s domestic standing was meant to impress, his devotion was meant to persuade, and his words were meant to seal trade between New Spain and Japan. Unfortunately, the domestic standing of the “King of Ōshū” did not register clearly abroad, his devotion remained an open question, and the chosen conduit for his words—Sotelo—stirred controversy rather than building trust. Hasekura provided a vessel, but his personal integrity could not accomplish diplomatic ends so long as his overlord’s character remained shrouded in

doubt. Nor could Hasekura overcome the red flags raised by the *Bautista* sailing into Acapulco. Messenger and patron alike were undone in part by their preferred means of transit.

Hasekura adhered to a broader trend in Japanese-Spanish relations, whereby frontline operatives did not prioritize establishing a written record. Nor did they regularly adopt written appeal or treatise to achieve the objectives of their superiors, who endeavored—not always successfully—to speak for themselves.³⁷ This partly explains the oversized role of friars in chronicling these missions, and suggests why Sotelo spent less time translating the opinions and greetings of his Japanese companions and more time explaining Date’s purported objectives. The principal communicative burden of diplomatic outreach lay in translating and explaining the wishes of Japanese patrons to a foreign audience. Missionaries were invariably better suited for this task given their residence in Japan and their standing in Europe. In the words of Ieyasu, Hidetada, and Date alike, Muñoz and Sotelo were “details” (*isai* 委細 for Ieyasu, *ikyoku* 委曲 for Date) men, in service of the broad strokes their patrons outlined.

Half a world away, theory yielded ground to reality, but Japanese leadership retained control of the big picture and did not formally embrace the language of debate. Ieyasu left little to negotiate in his 1610 “letter” to the Duke of Lerma. He merely offered what was his to give, and expected Spain to accept on the terms presented. Date used the rhetoric of religious fervor to strengthen his credentials as a potential trade partner, but similarly offered terms rather than empowering proxies to negotiate. Rhetorically at least, any such debate belonged to the realm of “details,” a convenient way for both the Tokugawa and the Date to retain distance if necessary.

³⁷ For example, the Sō of Tsushima altered correspondence between the shogunate and Joseon Korea to help reestablish ties and benefit from mediating between the two. Sotelo also inserted his voice and priorities into Date’s mission.

Sotelo emerged as a persistent negotiator and petitioner only in response to the group's lackluster reception throughout Spanish officialdom.

Japan's on-the-ground representatives thus often eschewed formal appeal in favor of putting into practice the relations envisioned by their sponsors. Commercial agents illustrate this dynamic especially well. Tanaka Shōsuke appears to have led the group of Japanese merchants aboard the *San Buena Ventura* in 1610.³⁸ Ieyasu sought commerce between New Spain and Japan, so Tanaka and his peers tested the market in Acapulco. Such an endeavor required intrepidity, haggling, and likely a few exercises in cross-cultural conflict resolution. In Tanaka's case, it also required rubbing shoulders with local elites, including the viceroy himself.³⁹ Undoubtedly, these interactions included exchanges of opinion and information, but Tanaka never spoke on behalf of the shogunate. He was expected to trade, not to chronicle or petition. Tanaka returned to Japan and presented the Tokugawa with tributary goods acquired in New Spain, not a diplomatic missive. In 1616, Yokozawa Shōgen likely served the same function on Date's behalf, as did the retainers whom Mukai dispatched as part of the same mission.

Date adjusted Hasekura and Sotelo's roles to accommodate the prolonged journey, the demands of meeting foreign heads of state, and the daimyo's own role within the Japanese political order. These adjustments made Hasekura more visible as a symbolic figure but required little active petition considering Sotelo's presence.⁴⁰ Date planned his communication strategy

³⁸ Gono Takashi, *Hasekura Tsunenaga* (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kobunkan, 2003), 32–33.

³⁹ Domingo Francisco de San Antón Muñón Chimalpahin Quauhtlehuanitzin, *Annals of HisTime: Don Domingo de San Antón Muñón Chimalpahin Quauhtlehuanitzin* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2006), 173.

⁴⁰ The friar helped define Hasekura's role, and likely drew upon the precedent established by the Jesuit-sponsored Tenshō Embassy from three decades prior. In 1582, Alessandro Valignano collaborated with the Kyushu Christian daimyo Ōtomo Sōrin to send four Japanese youth to Europe as part of a propaganda effort on behalf of the mission in Japan. See Michael Cooper, *The Japanese Mission to Europe, 1582-1590: The Journey of Four Samurai Boys*

with Sotelo, evidenced by his choice of letters to leadership in New Spain, Spain, and Rome, as well as the friar's hometown Seville. This process gave Sotelo sway in the daimyo's correspondence, but it also permitted Date to frame a consistent message to actors across the Spanish monarchy and present himself as friendly, informed, and engaged.⁴¹ Hasekura and Sotelo departed with letters for the Roman pontiff, the King of Spain, the city of Seville, the viceroy of New Spain, and the heads of the Franciscan order in Mexico and Rome. There was not much left for Hasekura to say. Sotelo departed from Date's stated intentions and rhetoric early and often, but in response to adverse circumstance and to little effect.

With regard to petitioning foreign authority, it is more fruitful to consider Date, not Hasekura, as the Japanese intermediary reaching out. Date did so nominally on behalf of the Tokugawa, and practically for his own gain. In his efforts, he adopted rhetoric the Tokugawa could not use, made promises the Tokugawa could not make without retracting earlier edicts, and engaged Spanish authority on multiple levels in a manner not appropriate for the pinnacle of the budding Tokugawa political order. These measures parallel the Sō clan of Tsushima's active mediation of relations with Joseon Korea, as well as the Shimazu clan of Satsuma's "management" of relations with the Ryukyu kingdom via conquest. The Tokugawa condoned, or at least accepted, the measures taken by these approved intermediaries. Date, likewise, was empowered to speak. Hasekura was one step removed from this process, though his seven-year sojourn and symbolic presence have raised his profile among historians. Chapter 1 began by discussing a letter from another Tokugawa deputy, the Nagasaki magistrate Terasawa Hirotada,

through Portugal, Spain and Italy (Folkestone: Global Oriental, 2005). It should be noted that Otomo did not seek commercial concessions from European leaders. The Tenshō Embassy also traveled on Portuguese vessels over established Portuguese sea lanes, and thus did not posit a new commercial relationship between Japan and Portugal.

⁴¹ For example, Date would have been unlikely to draft a letter to Seville in Sotelo's absence.

writing the governor-general of Manila. Pondering Hasekura's near-silence is akin to asking why the man who delivered Terasawa's letter to the Philippines did not make his own appeal to Spanish authorities. Messengers, by nature, deliver the words of others.

Hasekura did draft a letter soon after his arrival in Manila, and his choice of interlocutor highlighted the distinction between himself and Sotelo. Hasekura wrote his son, not his lord. He hastily penned a letter two days after the *Bautista*'s landing in August 1618, apparently in reply to a letter received in New Spain.⁴² Hasekura's missive contained warm wishes for his family, updates on the journey from New Spain ("uneventful"), and his current location in Luzon. Most notably, Hasekura wrote that he could not return to Japan that year, but promised to do so the following summer.

His two stated reasons stand out: he needed to make purchases on behalf of his lord (*tonosama onkaimono tomo itashi*, 殿様御かいものともいたし,), and he needed to ready a ship (*fune nado koshira[u]*, ふねなとこしら[う]).⁴³ The first reason defined his obligation to his lord as carrying out commercial transactions in Manila, and marks the only time Hasekura referred to Date in the letter. The second reason appears to reference the fact that Hasekura was now without a ship.⁴⁴ Perhaps he intended to outfit a ship to return directly to Sendai or Uraga, an unlikely destination for vessels out of Manila, or he may have hoped to replace the recently lost *Bautista* with a comparable vessel. This letter is the single statement of Hasekura's

⁴² Gonoï, *Hasekura Tsunenaga*, 218.

⁴³ Hasekura Tsunenaga to Kanzaburō (Hasekura Tsuneyori), 1618.08.12. *SDS*, doc. 324.

⁴⁴ The verb *koshirau* (拵う, in modern Japanese *koshiraeru* or *kosaeru* [拵える]) leaves room for interpretation. It can mean "manufacture" or "prepare." Thus Hasekura could have been writing of the need to build or ready a new ship or provision or "prepare" the *Bautista*. In the latter case, the governor-general would have not yet have purchased the ship. Given that Guadalcázar and Sotelo spoke of selling the *Bautista* before it left New Spain, I think it more likely that Hasekura was discussing the need for a new vessel.

intentions from his time in Manila, and was penned within a week of his arrival. He wrote in haste for a reason, for the next day his letter was onboard a ship bound for Japan.⁴⁵

As Hasekura closed the distance back to Japan, and then to Sendai, the record of his actions dilutes further. Yokozawa and the rest of the Japanese merchants and *Bautista* crew aboard the *Bautista*, now without a ship, presumably found passage back to Japan along with their goods. It is unclear if they engaged in another round of trading with Chinese or Spanish merchants in Manila before returning to the archipelago. But Hasekura remained. Gonoï Takashi speculates that Hasekura delayed so as to avoid separating from Sotelo.⁴⁶ Hasekura's presence may have provided Sotelo some cover had the friar been successful in leaving for Japan before 1620. The Tokugawa prohibition against missionaries complicated that proposition, and the friar's confinement to a monastery in summer 1619 dampened it further. Still, Hasekura lingered an additional year before finally departing Manila in August 1620. His two-year sojourn in the Philippines stands out all the more when considering how long the retainer kept his lord waiting. Date received word of the *Bautista*'s arrival in Manila by October 1618, a full twenty-two months before Hasekura departed the Philippines.

It was left to Sotelo, not Hasekura, to update Date. Hasekura's letter to his son appears to have traveled to Japan together with Sotelo's letter to the lord of Sendai. The content of Sotelo's letter is unknown, but Date received it in October 1618, along with a gift consisting of fifteen candles and a bottle of wine.⁴⁷ The friar Francisco Gálvez delivered the letter and presents to Date in his great hall, suggesting the continued ability of missionaries to move around Japan in

⁴⁵ Gonoï, *Hasekura Tsunenaga*, 218.

⁴⁶ Gonoï, *Hasekura Tsunenaga*, 225–26.

⁴⁷ *Date chike kiroku*, Genna 4.08.21 (1618.10.09). *SDS*, doc. 326.

the years following the Tokugawa edict.⁴⁸ Gálvez also reported Sotelo's intention to return to Japan. Two days later, Date wrote Mukai Shōgen to announce the *Bautista*'s arrival in the Philippines and the death of Mukai's retainers, while requesting to send a messenger to Manila.⁴⁹

Date house records noted receiving word from Sotelo, but said nothing of Hasekura at this time. Similarly, the daimyo's letter to Mukai mentioned the *Bautista* but did not name Sotelo or Hasekura. The flow of information reinforces the fact that Sotelo, not Hasekura, took charge of communication, even with Date. Once in the Philippines Hasekura appears to have acted as a commercial agent on behalf of his lord. Hasekura remained absent from Date records until his return in September 1620, accomplished without the daimyo's intercession.

The lengthy stay and apparent lack of urgency implies there was little left for Hasekura to do, or at least little immediate value to Hasekura hurrying home on his own. In contrast, there was specific value in Sotelo returning and reporting to Date. The replies from the monarchy that Sotelo carried required translation, a service Hasekura could not provide despite his long time abroad. Matsuda Kiichi suggests that friars discouraged foreign acquisition of the Spanish language by their Japanese peers during the mission to preserve the missionaries' central role in communication.⁵⁰ These linguistic arrangements obliquely support the notion that Date did not envision a communicative role for his retainer.

By summer 1620, Hasekura felt compelled to go. The circumstances of his departure reinforced his role. Hasekura took with him personal artifacts acquired in Europe, documents

⁴⁸ Gonoï, *Hasekura Tsunenaga*, 218. Date sources refer to Galvez as “Shinyoro” (志如呂), possibly an approximation of the Spanish *Señor*.

⁴⁹ *Date chike kiroku*, Genna 4.08.23 (1618.10.11). *SDS*, doc. 328.

⁵⁰ Matsuda Kiichi, *Keichō ken'ō shisetsu: Tokugawa Ieyasu to nanbanjin* (Tokyo: Chōbunsha, 1992), 209–10.

presented to him as an individual, and gifts purchased for his lord using the funds stipulated by the viceroy. The man entrusted with overseeing the economic and symbolic transaction between Date's Sendai domain and Catholic Europe returned to Japan with the fruits of those transactions. But the words—that is to say, Philip's reply—remained with Sotelo in Manila.

Nor did Date's retainer find his voice back in Sendai. More accurately, when he finally spoke, his words were not deemed worthy of recording. The following is the bare account of the *Date chike kiroku* (伊達治家記録, *Record of Date House Governance*) regarding Hasekura's return to Sendai in September 1620, in its entirety:

Today, Hasekura Rokuemon Tsunenaga and others returned to court from the Country of the Southern Barbarians. This person was sent across the ocean in the eighteenth year of the former Keichō Era in consultation with Lord Mukai Shōgen Tadakatsu. [He] went as far as the capital of the Southern Barbarians, and had an audience with the King 'Paapa' (the pope). He stayed [abroad] several years and recently returned from abroad on a vessel from Luzon. He bears a portrait of the king of the Country of Southern Barbarians (Pope Paul V) as well as a portrait of himself, among other items. He was conferred these Southern Barbarian-style pictures. As for the affairs of the Country of Southern Barbarians, Rokuemon's strange tales are most numerous.⁵¹

The attention to particular items that Hasekura returned with contrasts with the brief comment on the retainer's "strange tales" as "most numerous" (*kikai mottomo ōshi*, 奇怪最多). European-style portraits made for striking visual objects, worthy of comment. The portraits

⁵¹ *Date chike kiroku*, Genna 6.08.26 (1620.09.22). *SDS*, doc. 334.

of Hasekura and Paul V (Images 3 &4) remain central display objects in museum exhibits and catalogs to this day. The content of the portraits may help explain the lean account of Hasekura's return. One depicted Hasekura kneeling before a crucifix in worship. His hands are slightly spread, but his fingertips come together in prayer. Hasekura's eyes track upward to the figure of Christ before him and look on in solemn but alert devotion. Sartorial choices were blended, the collar and sleeves of a doublet visible beneath what appears to be a dark, Japanese-style robe.⁵² Hasekura also broadcasts his status as a Japanese warrior and retainer in the portrait. His hair is up in a topknot, and he kneels before the crucifix armed with a *wakizashi* blade.⁵³ Thus, Hasekura returned bearing a portrait of a member of Japan's ruling status group worshipping at the altar of a foreign, prohibited God.

The other portrait was no less layered in meaning. It depicted the leader of the Catholic Church and the ultimate earthly authority of the various missionary groups no longer permitted in Japan. Paul V occupies the portrait alone, appearing against a monotone dark background. His bearing is regal, and he confidently meets the eyes of his audience. His focus is directed outward not upward; he leaves the worship and adoration to Hasekura. It is a portrait of a leader. Whether or not Date interpreted the two images in quite the same way, he must have understood that he had been presented with one image of a foreign religious and spiritual leader and another of his own retainer worshipping a religion no longer permitted. The two images were probably met

⁵² It is possible the robe was also some form of European dress. I base my assertion here on Hasekura's appearance in a different portrait that stayed in Europe. In the latter, Hasekura dons bright Japanese dress robes with distinct patterns, most notably the deer that were an emblem of his family (see Image 5). However, in this full-body portrait as well, the collar and sleeves in European style are visible underneath the robes.

⁵³ Hasekura dons both swords in his other portrait, cited in the note above (Image 5). The lack of a hilt and the shorter grip strongly suggest that Hasekura is wearing only his *wakizashi* in the portrait under discussion here.

with some combination of fascination and unease.⁵⁴ Moreover, no promise of an ongoing commercial relationship accompanied these problematic objects. In this context, there was no benefit to recording Hasekura's statements at length or in depth, but there was a distinct risk of valorizing contact the Tokugawa would no longer countenance.

So Date made a statement of his own. The daimyo responded to Hasekura's strange tales and loaded imagery by issuing a three-article ban on Christianity.⁵⁵ Date ordered all Christians in his domain either exiled or executed, offered rewards for anyone providing information on Christians, and mandated all missionaries to apostatize or depart. Even though the Tokugawa edict of 1614 applied to all Japan, enforcement remained patchy, especially outside of the large Christian communities concentrated in the southwest of the archipelago. Similarly, persecution did not immediately intensify in northeastern Japan after Date's edict, but he set the stage for a crackdown on the religion in the decade ahead. The daimyo also needed to demonstrate compliance to the shogunate. He announced the ban on Christianity two days after Hasekura's return, but waited a month to announce his retainer's arrival to the shogunate.⁵⁶

Nevertheless, Date still faced the thorny issue of retrieving Sotelo. Despite the daimyo's newfound public aversion to Christianity, he would spend the next few years lobbying the shogunate for Sotelo's return even as the friar contemplated how best to break free of Manila. Hasekura Tsunenaga factored little, if at all, in the angling of his lord and in the return of his

⁵⁴ The fascination should not be discounted, as Date and his successors preserved these portraits and the other items Hasekura brought back—some with clear religious connotations—for the remainder of the Tokugawa period.

⁵⁵ Gonoï, *Hasekura Tsunenaga*, 230–31.

⁵⁶ *Date Masamune-kun kiroku inshōki*, Genna 6.09.23 (1620.10.18). *SDS*, doc. 335.

companion. He died within two years of returning to Sendai.⁵⁷ Having embarked in part to atone for the sins of his father, Hasekura successfully preserved his family's status as landed retainers, but the family fortunes continued to vacillate wildly through the seventeenth century. Hasekura's son Tsuneyori continued in Date's service, numbering among the guard for the Daimyo's Edo residence for a time.⁵⁸ However, Tsuneyori's wife was executed in 1637, and Tsuneyori himself in 1640, both on account of their Christian faith. By 1640, open practice of Christianity had been all but eliminated in Japan, and the shogunate had just put down a large uprising in Kyushu it saw as motivated by Christian rebels.⁵⁹ Tsuneyori and his wife's death were geographically very distant from these events, but a product of the same context of official intolerance. In 1670 Hasekura's branch recovered, as Tsuneyori's heir was granted a parcel of land and the family settled into a more stable existence.⁶⁰

Hasekura's 1620 return exemplified the division of diplomatic labor between himself and his Franciscan companion. Date's retainer returned with presents, mementos, and stories. Presumably, he had also overseen the "shopping" for his lord detailed in the letter to his son. He returned with portraits and personal accolades, and perhaps a newfound faith, but he did not return with any official reply from the monarchy or the papacy. When Hasekura and Sotelo finally parted ways in 1620, the letters stayed with the friar, despite authorities in Manila,

⁵⁷ There is some debate about whether Hasekura passed away in 1621 or 1622. Contemporary missionary reports suggest the latter date, and the family genealogy lists 1622. Takashi Gonoï discusses the issue in some detail before asserting a 1621 death. See Gonoï, *Hasekura Tsunenaga*, 242–44.

⁵⁸ Records of Tsuneyori's service to Date can be found in *SDS*, docs. 366–68.

⁵⁹ The Shimabara Rebellion (1637–38) was a rural uprising in present-day Nagasaki Prefecture, touched off in response to the excessive tax burdens imposed by the local lord. I discuss the rebellion in more detail later in this chapter.

⁶⁰ The family's fortunes in the seventeenth century, including the execution of Tsuneyori and his wife, are discussed in more depth in Gonoï, *Hasekura Tsunenaga*, 243–248.

Nagasaki, and Edo united in opposition to Sotelo ever traveling to Japan. Date's proxy had fulfilled his duty, and Date's spokesman would not be separated from his.

Crossing Over

Luis Sotelo's 1622 return to Japan provoked one final round of maneuvering, this time by Date Masamune. For half a decade the friar had adopted an obstinate flexibility in his efforts to represent the embassy, present its chief Japanese retainer, and either draw upon or reject Tokugawa authority in discussions with Spanish leadership. Now Date treaded carefully in positioning his relationship to Sotelo, first in the hope of aiding the friar's passage to Japan and later in the hope of releasing him from jail.

But 1622 presented Date with very different circumstances than his 1613 petition to free the friar. The Tokugawa ban on missionary activity in the archipelago was eight years old, and Sotelo's clandestine entry into Kyushu via Manila was the conduit most disconcerting to the shogunate. The missionary claimed to hold replies from Philip III and Paul V, but the Tokugawa had dismissed the Spanish monarch earlier, and felt little need to correspond with the pope. Moreover, the shogunate was also six years beyond the death of Ieyasu, the architect of its outreach in the early seventeenth century. Sotelo's presence was a crime, the letters he carried were from sovereigns the shogunate had already rejected, and the original sponsor of outreach across the Pacific was dead. There was little reason to accommodate the friar, or the requests of his patron far to the north.

In fall 1620, a letter from Date to Doi Toshikatsu, an influential advisor to Tokugawa Hidetada, announced Hasekura's return and asked how to proceed with Sotelo, still in Manila at the time.⁶¹ It is telling that Date did not address this letter to Mukai Shōgen, the admiral of the

⁶¹ Date Masamune to Doi Toshikatsu (draft), *SDS*, doc. 335.

fleet, his usual interlocutor for matters related to the embassy. The friar's passage to Japan would violate the 1614 Tokugawa prohibition, and Date sought intercession from the top.

In seeking an exception to the shogunate's law, Date invoked its involvement in the outreach to New Spain. The daimyo framed the *Bautista*'s departure for "Nanban" (南蛮) as born out of consultation with Mukai.⁶² Date also connected the project to the actions of Tokugawa leadership, stating that at the time the *Bautista* sailed, the shogunate sent correspondence, armor, and folding screens (*byōbu*). Here Date referenced the letters and gifts to the viceroy of New Spain that the Ieyasu and Hidetada had sent back with Sebastián Vizcaíno. Following discussion of the vessel and Tokugawa efforts, Date added that he had sent a retainer all the way to "Inner Nanban" (Europe) who had recently returned via a vessel from Luzon. All of this accurately reflected events, but did so in a manner emphasizing the daimyo's collaboration and consultation in a project in which the Tokugawa shoguns themselves had participated. Hasekura's departure and return became just one facet of a larger endeavor, in turn underplaying Date's individual involvement and initiative.

On the prickly point of Sotelo's return to Japan, Date found it prudent to insert some conceptual and syntactic distance between himself and the missionary. He did so principally by marooning the friar, depriving him of a clear sponsor at a time when sponsoring foreign missionaries was no longer in vogue. Everything that had traveled to any part of Nanban—the *Bautista*, Tokugawa gifts, Hasekura—were all "sent" there, Date using the transitive verb *tsukawas* (遣わす, to send or dispatch) in each instance. Just who did the sending was also quite clear: Date sent the *Bautista*, Ieyasu sent his gifts and letters, and Date sent a retainer. The

⁶² Ibid. Discussion of this source extends over the next several paragraphs.

exception was Sotelo, who “crossed” to Nanban. The intransitive verb “cross” (*wataru*, 渡る) left it unclear who facilitated that crossing, and Date made no effort to clarify. In contrast, although he again saw no need to name his retainer, the daimyo took ownership of sending Hasekura: “At that time (of sending the *Bautista*), I sent one of my own men.”⁶³ The Japanese language, then and now, has a high tolerance for omitting grammatical subjects, but Date made sure to include a word for “I” (*sessha*, 拙者) in this clause. By contrast, he brought up the friar as a “person from Nanban called Sotelo who stayed in Edo for some years.” In this account, no one was directly responsible for Sotelo, but invoking the friar’s residence in Edo implied a stronger connection with the shogunate than with the daimyo.

Date also treaded carefully around the matter of Sotelo’s profession. All previous letters by Date and the Tokugawa referred to the man as a *bateren* (伴天連), from the Portuguese word “padre,” indicating his status as a missionary. Here though, Sotelo was just a *Nanbanjin*, “a man from Nanban.” Although unstated, Sotelo’s Christian faith remained a central concern. Date reported Sotelo’s wish to return to Japan the following the year (1621) from Luzon, but that the “man from Nanban” had also heard of the Christian prohibition while in the Philippines. The letter reads as a descriptive relay of information from and about Sotelo, a man who crossed to Nanban, rather than a report on the status of a messenger, sent over the sea. If anything, Date appears as a messenger or conduit for Sotelo rather than the other way around. Date closed the letter by asking how to respond to Sotelo’s wish to return, framing the matter in terms of Sotelo’s actions and avoiding any explication of the obvious connection between the two men.

⁶³ Jp. *Sono migiri sessha uchi no mono tsukawashimōshi sōrō* (其砌拙者内之者遣申候). Here “one of my own” or “member of my house” referred to a vassal, not to a member of Date’s immediate or even extended family.

Downplaying Sotelo's faith and sidestepping the issue of patronage permitted Date to focus on his real concern: retrieving the letters Sotelo carried. The letters from Philip III and Paul V grounded Date's appeals before and after Sotelo's imprisonment. Their presence justified the daimyo's appeal to the shogunate, even as Date distanced himself from the circumstances of their acquisition. "[W]ord comes [from Sotelo] that there are replies from Nanban," Date reported, omitting to what—and to whom—the replies were. The only letters from Japan that Date mentioned were those sent by the Tokugawa, as the daimyo noted sending just the ship and his retainer. The note was oblique enough to suggest that Sotelo might carry letters for, or at least of great interest to, the Tokugawa. The shogunate harbored no illusions about Date's interests, but the daimyo did his best to position those interests as shared.

Unfortunately, when it came to Sotelo, Date and Tokugawa interests were no longer mutual. In some ways, the situation paralleled the Keichō Embassy's credibility issues in Europe. Sotelo again carried letters to a destination where the larger issues had already been decided. Ieyasu and Hidetada had together concluded that the Spanish monarchy no longer warranted diplomatic engagement and recognition. There was little reason to accept letters intended for a daimyo, especially if they were, again, carried in the hands of a missionary. Doing so would require a reversal of the precedent the shogunate established when dismissing Santa Catalina in 1616, as well as making an exception to an important domestic policy. Sotelo's prior experience in Japan and Date's desire to receive a reply did not merit such reversals. Finally, Spain had not signaled any shift on the core issues of trans-Pacific commerce, technology sharing, or a curtailment of missionary efforts. Empty words to an inferior in the hands of a missionary addressing issues already asked and answered held little appeal.

Conversely, for Date the letters offered prestige, validation, information, and perhaps a remote chance at a potential path forward. The Keichō Embassy had offered the opportunity to reshape and expand his place in a developing order the Tokugawa were constructing at home and abroad. Foreign engagement would have shaped his domestic role, as well as providing the material benefits of trade. By 1620, Date knew that opportunity had almost certainly vanished, but he also knew that no other letters from foreign sovereigns would be forthcoming, nor would he be permitted to write any more of his own.

The daimyo's efforts persisted after Sotelo's foiled infiltration and prompt incarceration by the Nagasaki magistrate, and the letters remained his top priority. A senior Sendai domain official, Ishimoda Muneyori, wrote to the imprisoned friar in August 1623, informing him of Date's continued efforts on his behalf.⁶⁴ Ishimoda explained plans to contact Doi Toshikatsu once more as well as the Nagasaki magistrate. As before, the petition to the former would focus on the fact that Sotelo carried replies from abroad. As for the friar's fate, the direction had reversed, with Date requesting that he be sent back rather than let in. There was no talk of Sotelo proceeding to Sendai. Ishimoda closed by telling to Sotelo to wait for further word.

It is unclear if further word ever came while the friar lived, as the record grows sparse. Any additional appeals to Doi or other shogunate officials in Edo yielded no practical effect and no record. A reply from the Nagasaki Magistrate to Ishimoda was non-committal. The latter was drafted in October 1623, but Sotelo lingered in jail almost another full year.⁶⁵

⁶⁴ Ishimoda Muneyori to Sotelo (draft), 1623.08.20. *SDS*, 355. Ishimoda was responding to two letters Sotelo had sent from prison, no longer extant.

⁶⁵ Hasegawa Genroku to Ishimoda Muneyori, 1623.10.21. *SDS*, 356.

The missionary chose a singularly ill-timed occasion to return to Japan. From 1622 to 1624 the shogunate moved definitively from stating intentions to demonstrating enforcement. In September 1622 the Tokugawa put to death fifty missionaries and lay Christians in Nagasaki, a month before Sotelo's return. In December 1623, another fifty were executed in Edo.⁶⁶ The latter executions carried important political ramifications. The execution grounds were just off the main road into the shogunate's capital from the south, and sent a clear signal to all who entered—including southern daimyo ruling over areas of Christian influence. The executions were likely also meant to demonstrate the resolve of the third shogun Tokugawa Iemitsu, who assumed the position that year following Hidetada's retirement.⁶⁷

The martyrdoms in Edo probably ended all efforts to intervene on Sotelo's behalf. The two best-known missionaries martyred that day were the Jesuit Jerome de Angelis and the Franciscan Francisco Gálvez, both active in northern Japan. Angelis is thought to be the first European to have traveled to Hokkaido, and his reports from Ōshū contained speculations on the motives behind Date's embassy.⁶⁸ Gálvez had in fact been the friar who delivered Sotelo's letter to Date in 1618; he stayed in the area for time afterwards to minister.⁶⁹

Iemitsu's intended audience was not limited to the south. Date was present in Edo for the executions, as were other northern daimyo ruling territories with a Catholic presence. The Christian populace in the north grew after 1614, fueled by earlier lay exiles and incognito

⁶⁶ Unless otherwise noted, details of the Edo Martyrdom and its aftermath rely on Hubert Cieslik, "The Great Martyrdom in Edo, 1623: Its Causes, Course, Consequences," *Monumenta Nipponica* 10, no. 1/2 (1954): 1–44.

⁶⁷ As with Ieyasu before him, Hidetada wielded effective power in retirement. Hidetada came to Edo and consulted with his son before the death sentences were announced in Iemitsu's name. See Cieslik, "The Great Martyrdom," 25.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 3–7.

⁶⁹ Ganoi, *Hasekura Tsunenaga*, 218.

missionaries—Angelis and Gálvez among them—operating after the prohibition. Enforcement of Date's own 1620 ban on Christianity had been half-hearted. But Iemitsu now left no room for ambiguity. The new shogun summoned Date to the Tokugawa castle in Edo in January 1624, and discussed over tea the need to suppress Christianity in Edo and the north.⁷⁰ Within a month seven Christians had been put to death in Sendai. Date's daimyo peers launched similar campaigns of persecution, and 1624 marked a demonstrable decline in Catholic activity across northern Japan. Communication by Sendai officials with or on the subject of Sotelo appears to end in fall 1623. It is likely there was nothing left to say.

Whatever the shogunate's deliberations regarding its one-time diplomatic agent and current prisoner, by summer 1624 it had made up its mind. On 25 August, Sotelo, the Japanese friar, the youth who had traveled with him from Manila, and two other missionaries were led to an execution ground in Kyushu's Ōmura. Nagasaki officials oversaw the proceedings. All five were tied to posts and burned alive. Leon Pages' nineteenth-century account records that Sotelo was one of the last to die, asphyxiating on the smoke around him. The Catholic Church recognizes all five as martyrs. Additionally, in 1867 Pope Pius IX beatified 205 martyrs in Japan who died between 1617 and 1632, including Sotelo and the four men with him.

The day before his execution Sotelo purportedly entrusted the replies he carried to another missionary with instructions to forward them to Date at the appropriate time.⁷¹ Date house records make no mention of receiving them, nor do Tokugawa sources note either confiscating or disposing of them, and they are not mentioned again.

⁷⁰ Cieslik, "The Great Martyrdom," 36.

⁷¹ Ganoi, *Hasekura Tsunenaga*, 249.

The fate of these letters and their failure to reach the intended recipient paralleled the decay of Tokugawa-Habsburg relations following Japan's first forays across the Pacific. The king did not want to write them, the shogun did not want to read them, but intermediaries labored for a decade trying to get them across the oceans between. Despite their symbolic importance and ceremonial presentation, the letters traveling back and forth were never the most effective tools. Although never acknowledged as such, from 1610 onward the most efficacious diplomacy had been conducted via ships: their dispatch and detainment, their purchase and destination. Self-interested and self-important as he may have been, Sotelo had been the most vociferous human intermediary between Tokugawa Japan and Habsburg Spain. However, he was never able to overcome the *Bautista*'s impact, be it the arrival of the vessel itself, the news it carried, or its guarded reception in New Spain.

Sotelo's 1624 death represented one end for the Keichō Embassy, but Philip III and the Tokugawa hegemony had decided the issue through their mutual disinterest in each other's priorities and the visions undergirding them, even if it took a few years for all to realize. Superficially this impasse left Japanese-Spanish relations in 1624 in the same place they had been at the time of Terasawa's 1601 letter: anchored by the connection between Manila and southern Kyushu. Two decades of outreach and avoidance, together with a decade of intensifying persecution, cast the future of that connection in serious danger. Even as Sotelo futilely arranged to get his letters to Date, Manila attempted to salvage a rapidly fraying relationship.

Final Outreach and Aftermath

Governor-General Alonso Fajardo de Entenza took up his post in Manila at a troubled time. Dutch aggression capped a decade of maritime conflict between the Iberian crown and its rebellious subjects from the Netherlands. Fajardo's route to the Philippines exemplified the

strained state of Spain's military, fiscal, and administrative architecture. Stripped of his flotilla and soon at the receiving end of a Dutch blockade, Fajardo saw his purchase of the *Bautista* as a strategic necessity.⁷²

In some ways, the *Bautista*'s 1618 arrival in Manila should have signaled victory for the city, removing the specter of Japanese competition across the North Pacific. However, Date's vessel and the news it carried also signaled Madrid and Mexico's withdrawal from direct diplomatic engagement with Japan. Japanese-Spanish relations now collapsed back into the single theater of the western Pacific, where the shogunate could dictate the terms of engagement. Manila's representative had intervened on customs levies to prevent Japanese retaliation against the Philippines, but now the islands would have to deal with the diplomatic blowback resulting from two decades of unsuccessful and unwelcome Japanese outreach. Combined with the worsening commercial ramifications of religious persecutions, the islands now shouldered the full diplomatic burden at a difficult time. Leaders would be hard-pressed to enjoy anything but a pyrrhic victory at the closing of the Pacific. As Sotelo endured prison, relations between the islands and the archipelago quickly unraveled.

Manila reached out in two consecutive years employing two different strategies, but only succeeded in confirming the shogunate's dismissal. In 1623, Manila dispatched a final diplomatic mission to the Tokugawa, perhaps timed to coordinate with the accession of the third shogun, Hidetada's son Tokugawa Iemitsu (1604–1651, r. 1623–1651).⁷³ The Philippine treasury

⁷² Fajardo counted the *Bautista* among the four vessels on hand for defense against the Dutch in 1619. This appears to be the final extant reference to Date's vessel. Fajardo also suspected the Dutch were being reinforced with vessels from Japan. Alonso Fajardo de Tenza to Philip III, 1619.08.10, in *B&R*, XVIII, 248–251.

⁷³ Hidetada continued to exert influence as retired shogun, like Ieyasu before him

invested 59,800 pesos in the endeavor, a substantial commitment of financial resources.⁷⁴

Fernando de Ayala led the mission, carrying a letter and presents for Iemitsu. Cognizant of the climate, Manila pointedly avoided deputizing a religious figure to pursue the mission. Well-outfitted, well-provisioned, offering trade and goodwill with the full support of leadership, Ayala represented Manila's best effort. Even so, Iemitsu summarily turned him away, brushing him aside more quickly than his father and grandfather has dispensed with Santa Catalina a decade prior. The shogunate denied Ayala permission even to enter Edo.⁷⁵ He returned to Manila in 1624, and the expense of his embassy came to naught.

The final blow arrived the next year, when Manila abandoned all pretext of official channels and dispatched a ship solely for trade. This last gesture proposed a simple transactional relationship, stripped of the friction of diplomatic protocol. The arrangement modeled the Tokugawa relationship with Ming China: no diplomatic relations but steady private trade through approved channels. Yet the results were no different. Authorities turned the vessel away without permitting any trade.⁷⁶ The message was clear: Spaniards were no longer welcome in Japan.

The degradation in relations stemmed from an implicit disagreement about whether Manila best functioned as a way-station or a destination. In reaching out across the Pacific, the Tokugawa shogunate and Date implicitly envisioned the former. The archipelago's leadership proposed replacing a single route with a network incorporating multiple nodes on the western rim of the ocean. Traffic between Manila and Acapulco would continue, supplemented by additional traffic across from Japan. Manila would have two points of contact with the

⁷⁴ Juan Gil, *Hidalgos y samurais: España y Japón en los siglos XVI Y XVII*, Alianza Universidad 675 (Madrid: Alianza Editorial, 1991), 450–51.

⁷⁵ Nagazumi Yōko, *Shuinsen* (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 2001), 120.

⁷⁶ Tremml-Werner, *Spain, China, and Japan in Manila*, 249.

archipelago: the existing trade concentrated in the southwest and an additional trade and supply route rooted in ports like Uraga farther north and east.

This prospect contrasted with the vision for the Philippines that won out within official Spanish discourse. Opinions on the role of the Philippines varied within the monarchy, but ultimately those who advocated for Manila as the singular destination for Spanish commercial traffic into and out of Asia carried the day.⁷⁷ Nowhere was this more the case than in the islands themselves, where voices consistently worked to preserve Manila's commercial prerogative against a backdrop of geopolitical vulnerability.

Anachronistically, the above vision “worked” insofar as the Manila circuit endured for multiple centuries, but a misunderstanding of Japanese motives undercut the commercial relevance of the islands, even as continued spiritual malfeasance (as seen from the shogunate's perspective) endangered the islands' very real and very important trade relationship with Japan. Manila never fully grasped its competitive advantage in the eyes of Tokugawa leadership relative to other Asian ports, nor did it understand the consequences of refusal. Observers then and scholars recently have focused on two things Manila provided: access to Chinese merchants and a source of American silver. Japanese were not interested in importing silver but were keen on access to Chinese merchant networks. Even here though, Manila was but one point of access. Japan had access to Chinese goods via merchants trading in Nagasaki, the annual Portuguese carrack out of Macao, and the extended network of *shuin* trade authorized by the shogunate. From the second decade of the century onward the recently-arrived Dutch and English were also attempting to build capacity and access to Chinese goods and markets, though at this early stage neither enjoyed much success.

⁷⁷ These debates are covered in the previous chapter.

Manila, and the Spanish more generally, uniquely offered two possibilities: establishing foreign trade in eastern Japan, and access to American markets, materiel, and expertise. The Philippines never committed to the former, while fears of a silver drain, concerns over the loss of a maritime monopoly, and jealousy over critical technologies stymied the latter. By rejecting Pacific commerce, Manila reduced itself to simply one of several venues for the trade in textiles and other commodities in East Asia. Manila sabotaged its utility in the eyes of the shogunate, and only compounded the problem with its continued support of Catholic missionaries. Having denied Japan's terms of engagement for a quarter century, by 1625 there was little to recommend the islands to the Tokugawa.

Diplomatic relations may have ended, but entanglements persisted into the next decade and were defined by the potential for conflict and the threat of invasion. *Shuin* vessels stopped calling on Manila in 1624, but the system of licensed trade did not wind down fully until 1635, leaving Japanese and Spanish vessels active in the same sea routes a decade after the cessation of formal ties. In 1628 a Spanish fleet attacked, plundered, and destroyed a number of ships off the coast of Ayutthaya in Siam, among them a newly-constructed *shuin* vessel belonging to Takagi Sakuemon, a prominent Nagasaki merchant.⁷⁸ The Spanish had hoped to land a blow against the Dutch, but when the VOC failed to appear the fleet shifted its attention elsewhere. The Spaniards set fire to Takagi's ship, but not before making off with the vessel's cargo of deerskins and sappanwood and sending forty-two Japanese sailors on to Manila as captives.⁷⁹

The Spaniards' disregard of the shogunate's authority required a response. A ship out of Nagasaki called on Manila soon after, demanding recompense and the return of forty-two

⁷⁸ See Nagazumi Yōko, *Shuinsen*, 82–83.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

Japanese taken captive in the raid.⁸⁰ Manila complied, sending the Japanese back on a Chinese junk. Not long after, another Japanese vessel arrived on behalf of the daimyo Matsukura Shigemasa (1574–1630), daimyo of Shimabara, under the auspices of reopening trade. Its surprise arrival in turn raised suspicion in Manila that the Japanese were actually planning an attack. These suspicions were warranted. Matsukura did seem to be preparing for an invasion before his untimely death in 1630 brought an end to any such plans.⁸¹

Seven years later, revenge still seemed to be on the mind of Nagasaki officials. They began pressuring the Dutch to provide naval support in a potential Japanese attack on Manila as a form of “service” to the shogunate. Having adopted the language of vassalage to stay in Tokugawa good graces, the Dutch were trapped, and were reluctantly prepared to divert precious naval resources to a gambit on Manila.⁸² It appears the impetus for the endeavor did not extend to Edo, but remained stemmed from Nagasaki officials who still cited the Spanish aggression in Siam.⁸³ This time, however, domestic rebellion precluded foreign invasion. In late 1637, the Shimabara rebellion broke out, as thousands of Kyushu farmers revolted against onerous taxation. To the shogunate’s additional alarm, the rebellious farmers had rallied around a Christian standard, implying resistance not just to one capricious daimyo but to the entire ideological order of the shogunate. Putting down the rebellion required a siege of Hara Castle.

⁸⁰ Ibid. Another ship traveled to Portuguese Macao, the shogunate having lumped the Iberians together due to their shared monarch. Both ships were Portuguese vessels with a skeleton crew. It appears that some Iberians were held as captives in Nagasaki until the shogunate received redress.

⁸¹ Clulow, *The Company and the Shogun*, 122–25. Shigemasa’s successor was Matsukura Katsuie, whose harsh rule prompted the 1637–38 Shimabara rebellion.

⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ Yamamoto Hirofumi, *Kan’ei jidai* (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 1989).

The Dutch credibly provided “service” by shelling the castle, shogunate forces stormed and sacked the stronghold in April 1638, and any plans on Manila were discounted.⁸⁴

Conclusion: Competing Visions & Incompatible Offers

In a simplistic summary of events, the Tokugawa shogunate spent ten years trying to propose trade, the Spanish monarchy spent five years saying no, and everyone subordinate to either pole spent another decade sorting through the implications of this unsatisfactory exchange. Each polity asked for too much, and neither offered enough. Layers of authority compounded problems of geographical distance, as did each polity’s approach to delegated authority. The intermediaries charged with navigating the space between endured these challenges while adding complications of their own. This final section of the account steps back to evaluate the terms each polity proposed, their manner of presenting these terms and representing the authority behind them, and the imperfect intermediaries charged with bridging the oceans between.

For Japan and Spain alike, there existed a large gap between the superficial content of proposals and their deeper implications. Nominally, Tokugawa and Date offered expanded trade, safe harbors, affordable provisions, land and accommodations, and maritime aid. By means of these same proposals Japanese leadership also implicitly proposed coopting the Spanish monarchy’s intra-colonial commerce and gaining mastery of state technologies like navigation, ship construction, and mining. Japanese leadership also rejected the evangelical project embedded in Spain’s colonial impulse, Date’s letters and Sotelo’s rhetoric notwithstanding.

Spanish authorities and their intermediaries pitched a similarly high price while offering even less. The monarchy briefly supported extending Pacific commerce to include direct trade with Japan, provided Spanish vessels monopolized the route, and by extension, the knowledge

⁸⁴ Clulow, *The Company and the Shogun*, 125–28.

required to complete it. Additionally, the monarchy required tolerance of Christianity and expulsion of the Dutch. These two provisions impinged on Tokugawa authority by dictating to the shogunate its trading partners and requiring the acceptance of an alternative ideology. These provisos came precisely at the time when the Tokugawa labored to establish legitimacy in the domestic sphere and abroad. When confronted with Date's ambition, the monarchy scuttled even its temperate approval of commerce across the Pacific.

The waters of early modern East Asia facilitated encounters on what we often term a "global" scale, but maintaining those connections became difficult in the absence of shared appeal. The particulars of trade between Japan and the Americas remained hazy, with no obvious economic incentive to help overcome friction in other spheres. Chinese thirst for silver combined with Spanish desire for textiles and other goods from Asia to keep the Manila galleons sailing each year. China's two largest sources of silver, Japan and Spain, had no immediate and obvious product to trade with each other. Japanese armor and folding screens, Spanish wine and wool could fuel curiosity and experimentation, but they could not power sustainable trans-Pacific relations in the absence of official enthusiasm.

The issue of who and how compounded the problem of what. Edo and Madrid were apex authorities atop composite hierarchies. This fractured the geography of relations on either "side," rendering each more complex. In the early 1600s, the shogunate and daimyo split the administration and execution of foreign trade and relations, while the Spanish monarchy enforced a chain of colonial command stretching from Madrid to Mexico and then across to Manila. It took years of maneuvering for the (retired) shogun to communicate with the king, and years of waiting to get a response. Technically, Philip III's letters to Ieyasu and Hidetada were

the only instance in which the central leadership of one polity directly addressed that of the other during the entire time period under discussion here. Fittingly, they were rejected.

In lieu of direct correspondence between Edo and Madrid, each polity adopted differing approaches to the delegation and suggestion of its authority. Date operated under Tokugawa sanction but with a great deal of flexibility, sending an embassy in his own name as the “King of Ōshū.” The daimyo’s effort spared the shogunate the risk of material loss and permitted appeal to foreign leadership and religion in a manner Tokugawa dignity could not allow. The shogunate affirmed its writ at home by permitting the daimyo to reach out abroad, with both the Tokugawa and Date standing to benefit from the establishment of commercial ties.

Conversely, the Spanish monarchy’s delegates continually reinforced and deferred to the authority of their king. They pushed the responsibility of commitment ever upward. The monarchy possessed the administrative capacity to reach out but proved ill-equipped to handle the polities that reached back. Manila might independently communicate with Japan, for example, but nobody had a ready answer to the challenge of Japanese ships arriving in the Americas. The monarchy’s delegates could stall, pause, or otherwise preserve the status quo, but hesitated to do anything else without Madrid’s guidance. In 1611 the viceroy of New Spain unilaterally sent Vizcaíno to Japan, but only to offer thanks and collect more information. He offered no commitment, and all would have to wait on the ruling of the king.

A series of imperfect intermediaries conducted the textual and rhetorical dialogue between two apex authorities increasingly disinclined to listen. Date Masamune proclaimed friendship, but he never overcame his dubious diplomatic and spiritual credentials. Luis Sotelo attempted to blend the commercial and spiritual ends of the Keichō Embassy to overcome his patron’s legitimacy gap, but his half-truths and persistent ambitions proved more annoying than

effective. Hasekura Tsunenaga served as a mostly silent and mostly symbolic envoy, hemmed in by Date's dubious status and Sotelo's dubious arguments. Sebastián Vizcaíno was a haughty but mostly impotent representative in Tokugawa eyes, and prevented any semblance of a united front among the Spanish contingent upon the *Bautista*'s arrival in New Spain. Even Vivero, perhaps the most vivid combination of good intentions, considerateness, personal investment, and individual expression, put too high a price on commercial and technological exchange in Japan and exerted little influence upon his return.

The contrast in diplomatic strategies and the pitfalls of individual tactics inhibited outreach. Date's endeavor raised questions of credibility that his deputies never overcame. Similarly, hesitation and deferral by a series of Spanish officials dampened Tokugawa interest in pursuing trade, even as missionaries continued to test the shogunate's tolerance in other arenas. With the messengers undermined, the two polities carried out a passive-aggressive ship diplomacy that stood in for the explicit rejection or repudiation of each another. The Tokugawa sent a vessel; the viceroy purchased it. Date sent a vessel; the next viceroy rerouted it, and the governor-general took it off the daimyo's hands. The ships sailing the waters formed a proxy dialogue, one that always proved halting and eventually succumbed to distrust and disinterest.

As a result of its inability to establish trust, Date's mission undercut the Tokugawa effort as much as Tokugawa persecution undercut the daimyo. Sotelo and Hasekura proved most impactful as they journeyed toward Europe and the monarchy used the reports and memorials that their movement generated to formulate policy toward the shogunate. The Keichō Embassy indeed influenced contemporary events, just never in the way its participants and sponsor envisioned.

By electing to keep Acapulco closed, Philip III become one of the very few leaders to reject Tokugawa outreach. The other notable exception proved to be Ming (and later Qing) China, as the shogunate opted not to reconcile itself to China's own hierarchical ordering of the world. The Chinese model also cast a shadow over the normalization of relations between Joseon Korea and the new shogunate. Only by extracting both sides from Chinese terminology and protocol and establishing their own were the two polities able to talk to each other, along with the aid of some well-timed forgery.⁸⁵ Though relations subsequently operated on a basis of rough equality, the new status quo was a victory for Japan's own emerging diplomatic order.

Tokugawa Japan's difficulty normalizing relations with China and Spain speaks to the challenges confronting polities that articulated a "global" diplomacy. The Chinese Middle Kingdom has remained an archetype for such a polity throughout much of its history, spawning studies and comparisons for generations.⁸⁶ The Tokugawa break from this order has similarly defined the subfield of Japan's foreign relations. Japan's outreach coincided with the Pax Hispanica in Europe (1598–1621), brokered by a flurry of Spanish diplomatic engagement in the decades before the Thirty Years' War (1618–1648). That Europe's own "Middle Kingdom" could not find common ground with the Tokugawa's developing "Japanocentric World Order" suggests the struggles of polities to engage one another when both make claims to expansive, apex power outside the familiar dichotomy of European empires and Sinocentric hierarchy. The brief window when Japan expanded out into the Pacific highlights this dissonance. More robust

⁸⁵ The shogunate's final break with Ming China and its earlier, successful rapprochement with Joseon Korea are discussed extensively in Ronald Toby, *State and Diplomacy in Early Modern Japan: Asia in the Development of the Tokugawa Bakufu* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984).

⁸⁶ An early, influential example is John King Fairbank, ed., *The Chinese World Order: Traditional China's Foreign Relations* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1968). For a more recent survey reflecting on China and East Asia's diplomatic framework, see David C Kang, *East Asia Before the West: Five Centuries of Trade and Tribute*, *Contemporary Asia in the World* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010).

comparisons with other cases beyond East Asia and Europe might yield further understanding of how apex authorities navigated encounter in the early modern world.

Speculative conceptualizations aside, the fraught Tokugawa-Habsburg encounter had more immediate effects. Following the withdrawal of Japanese vessels, the Pacific Ocean remained a barrier to inter-polity commercial trade for well over a century. The ocean did of course facilitate the commercial and material exchange provided by the Manila galleons. Additionally the North Pacific, in particular, would carry (and occasionally claim) an increasing number of fur traders, explorers, pirates, and whalers. The ocean was never empty, above or below. But new incursions across the Pacific following the *Bautista* principally looked to exploit, explore, and extract. Bilateral trans-Pacific trade came much later, and Ieyasu's nineteenth-century successors would be coerced into joining.

The *Bautista*'s sale also helped lock into place Tokugawa Japan's sites of foreign trade and the daimyo involved in their operation. The approved "portals" into Japan were being decided, and Date's Sendai domain would not number among them. Even before the *Bautista*'s first voyage in 1613, Satsuma, Tsushima, and Matsumae had all established themselves—if not yet firmly—as the intermediaries for the Ryukyu Kingdom, Joseon Korea, and the indigenous people of Ezo (present-day Hokkaido), respectively. Nagasaki continued to be the primary port of foreign commerce throughout the rest of the Edo period. Following Date's gambit, the most significant adjustment regarding daimyo and the sites of trade was the Dutch presence in Hirado domain. There, the Matsuura clan managed relations between the VOC and the shogunate for over three decades until the Tokugawa famously mandated that the company inhabit the man-made island of Dejima in Nagasaki, following the expulsion of the Portuguese from the same locale.

Shedding competing “global” frameworks helped the shogunate establish comparatively firm control of their borders and the people permitted to move through and approach them. Having sorted relations with neighboring Asian polities in the first two decades of the seventeenth century, the Tokugawa spent the next two sorting out relations with the “Southern Barbarians.” The English departed in 1623 of their own accord, unable to turn a profit. Spanish intransigence on trade with the Americas, the Dutch, and Christianity negated the possibility of access to new markets in the Western Hemisphere. The Portuguese fell victim to their association with the Habsburg crown and their relationship to Catholic missionaries. The Tokugawa relationship with the Dutch remained rocky, and even ceased for a time, but the shogunate “tamed” the VOC in time, checking the company’s problematic impulses towards violence and sovereignty in a manner more conducive to the Tokugawa’s hierarchical vision of relations.⁸⁷

Culling trading partners did not curtail commercial activity. In terms of trade volume, Japan’s foreign commerce peaked in the late 1630’s, well after regular commerce with Manila came to an end. Before expelling the Portuguese in 1639, the shogunate asked the VOC if it could make up the difference, to which the company assuredly responded that it could. Trade continued at near-peak levels in the ensuing decades, before the shogunate’s own tinkering with bullion flows and import substitution effected a reduction decades later.⁸⁸ This Tokugawa control over access has shaped notions of Japanese isolation and insularity in the popular and academic imagination alike, but Philip III and his officials would have envied the accomplishment. To

⁸⁷ Clulow, *The Company and the Shogun*, 1.

⁸⁸ For qualitative data on Japan’s volume of trade in the seventeenth century, see Chapter Four of Robert Leroy Innes, “The Door Ajar: Japan’s Foreign Trade in the Seventeenth Century” (Ph.D., University of Michigan, 1980), 376–473.

make the drive for control over foreign encounter a Japanese proclivity overstates the case for isolation, just as ruminations on the archipelago's withdrawal in the seventeenth century overstates what "the world" had to offer and its willingness to do so.

For the Spanish monarchy, at least, Tokugawa Japan posed the dual threats of exclusion and expansion. In attempting to prevent the latter, Spanish officials helped bring about the former. Additionally, the specter of Japanese commercial expansion posed an especial threat to Spain. In the 1590s, Japan's territorial ambitions under Tokugawa predecessor Toyotomi Hideyoshi brought the country into direct conflict with Joseon Korea and Ming China. By contrast, the resumption and expansion of trade among these polities under the Tokugawa operated as a palliative alternative to direct violence. For other European communities raiding, trading, and cajoling their way into Asian trade networks, Japan's commercial participation was an opportunity, not a threat.

Furthermore, only for the Spanish monarchy did Tokugawa commercial expansion register as an acute "domestic" threat. Distinct from other European interlopers at this time, Spain operated as a settler power in Asia. Its network depended on colonies, not factories. It participated in foreign trade via domestic bullion. Manila served as an important gateway for a variety of Asian products, but it was the lure of Spanish silver that brought Chinese merchants there, and the lure of Chinese merchants that attracted Japanese and others. The monarchy's unique geographic and economic position in East Asia is both what piqued Ieyasu's curiosity and what prompted Philip's possessiveness.

Stated differently, the Spanish monarchy emphasized maintaining its proprietary flow of goods rather than developing new networks of commercial partners. In contrast, the Tokugawa looked to repair, expand, and secure their trade relations. Bringing these contacts under the

shogunate's management helped assert domestic authority at a time when central authority governed a federated group of regional lords rather than ruling in uniform fashion across the archipelago. Both polities emphasized control over access, an unsurprising observation. However, despite our narratives to the contrary, in seventeenth century East Asia the Spanish monarchy shaded more toward exclusion, while the Tokugawa pursued a program of cultivated and managed access. In this, at least, both polities succeeded.

Conclusion

The library staff presented Iwakura Tomomi and his colleagues with a surprise during their tour of the Biblioteca del Reale Archivio di Stato in Venice. It was May 1873, and Iwakura and his companions were touring Europe as ambassadors of the recently established Meiji government. Their Venetian hosts told them the archive held two letters from one “Hasekura Rokuemon [Tsunenaga],” who had written the city at the beginning of the seventeenth century. At Iwakura’s request the archivists retrieved the curious documents, two letters written in Latin with an unmistakably Japanese signature adorning the bottom. The nineteenth-century ambassadors had no firm idea of who their countryman and predecessor might be.¹

It did not stop the group from speculating. Iwakura’s secretary and mission diarist Kume Kunitake recorded a number of theories as to Hasekura’s origin. The chronicler’s official record stated that Hasekura was a legate of Ōtomo Sōrin (1530–1587), a prominent Christian daimyo of the late sixteenth century. Kume’s more personal reflections followed, and contained additional musings. Perhaps Hasekura had been an exiled Christian. Another line of thought supposed that he was a Toyotomi loyalist who had fled the battle of Osaka and may have hoped to enlist foreign aid in overthrowing the usurping Tokugawa. A final stray thought noted a rumor that Hasekura was a retainer of the northern daimyo Date Masamune. However, such an origin

¹ The details of the Iwakura Mission in Venice here and in the paragraphs that follow are taken from Kume Kunitake, *Tokumei zenken taishi Beiō kairan jikki* (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1985), 4:350–355. In English, see Kume, Kunitake, *The Iwakura Embassy, 1871–73: A True Account of the Ambassador Extraordinary & Plenipotentiary’s Journeys of Observation through the United States and Europe*, trans. P. F. Kornicki (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002) 4:352–355. Although Sotelo and Hasekura had intended to visit Venice, they were later forced to abandon these plans.

appeared unlikely to the author, as there “seem[ed] to be some doubt as to whether Date was even in contact with the West.”²

They were not going to solve the mystery while in Italy. Iwakura bid Kume to make copies of the documents, and four days later the mission continued on to Austria. The group intended to augment its tour of southern Europe with a sojourn in Spain, but political unrest following the declaration of the Republic of Spain in February 1873 disrupted those plans, and Kume had to content himself with drafting a brief profile of the country from outside its borders. Upon the group’s return to Japan in September 1873, Iwakura spearheaded the rediscovery and reexamination of the Keichō Embassy, including the material remains of the mission preserved by the Date clan for over two centuries. The Meiji emperor viewed the collection during his progression to the northeast in 1876, and newspapers and museums began playing their parts in publicizing the endeavor for the new nation.³

The Iwakura Mission arrived in Europe with different goals, different expectations, and a different relationship to domestic authority than its seventeenth-century predecessor. It hoped to undo previous agreements rather than establish new ones. In the years before and after the 1868 Meiji Restoration, the Euro-American Great Powers had forced Japan to ratify a series of unequal treaties, forcing open ports, establishing foreign enclaves, and granting extraterritoriality to the states striding across the globe with the easy confidence that imperialism offered.⁴

² Kume, *The Iwakura Embassy*, 355.

³ For example, the Meiji-era newspaper *Tokyo nichichi shinbun* ran a story on the embassy during the emperor’s procession on 1876.07.03. See *DNS* 12-12, 552–556 (Japanese-language section).

⁴ For analysis of the Iwakura Mission see, Ian Hill Nish, ed., *The Iwakura Mission in America and Europe: A New Assessment* (Surrey: Japan Library, 1998). See also, Michael R. Auslin, *Negotiating with Imperialism: The Unequal Treaties and the Culture of Japanese Diplomacy* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2004).

Iwakura and his fellow ambassadors did not face the questions of credibility that plagued Hasekura and Sotelo. The nineteenth-century mission solved the problem of imperfect intermediaries by eliminating them. The Iwakura Mission *was* the Meiji government as much as it represented it. Iwakura, the plenipotentiary ambassador, was the most important leader of the Meiji Restoration drawn from the court nobility in Kyoto. Three of the four vice-ambassadors cast an even longer shadow over the country's history, and number among the most important figures of Meiji Japan. Ōkubo Toshimichi and Kido Takayoshi formed two-thirds of the triumvirate that had structured the provisional Meiji state in 1868, while Itō Hirobumi, already a high-ranking official by 1871, went on to chair the body that drafted the Meiji Constitution (1889) before serving as prime minister on four separate occasions. Even had Date traveled to Madrid himself, he could not have come close to matching the domestic standing Iwakura, Ōkubo, and their companions enjoyed in 1871.

The Iwakura Mission also represented a very different government. Like the Tokugawa two hundred and sixty years prior, the Meiji state was yet unsettled, but unlike the shogunate it claimed uniform, centralized control of the archipelago. The national government had abolished the domains in early 1871, with Iwakura, Ōkubo, and Kido among the group that enacted the plan to decisively shift power to a newly imperial Tokyo. From then on, there was a single Japanese state that held no interest in outsourcing diplomacy to regional daimyo or deputies. This issue had been contested less than a decade prior, when Satsuma domain presented its own pavilion separate from that of Tokugawa Japan at the International Exposition of 1867 in Paris.⁵

⁵ Robert I. Hellyer, *Defining Engagement: Japan and Global Contexts, 1640-1868* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2009), 201–02.

However, the Iwakura Mission did share something with the Keichō Embassy: it failed. The mission's time in the United States and Great Britain made it clear that the Great Powers felt no inclination to revise the onerous treaty regime they had imposed, and Japan lacked the leverage to make them reconsider. Unable to achieve this goal, the group doubled down on another aim, making the most of its first-hand experience to learn how the Western powers structured domestic society and global orders in line with their “advanced” understanding of industry, sovereignty, and civilization. The mission became a hallmark of Meiji-era initiative, part of a longer narrative of Japan's industrialization and modernization, as well as its ability to adopt the features and flaws of imperial nation-states. It is remembered as a great success.

Helping to shape the course of Meiji Japan frames the Iwakura contingent as national figures. In contrast, the Keichō Embassy enjoys a nation-wide profile but remains strongly associated with a particular area. Popular history and culture have made Date Masamune a household name, but one tied squarely to Sendai domain and the present-day Tōhoku region.

The twenty-first century has turned Hasekura and his patron into symbols of hope. In fall 2013, a series of events in Miyagi prefecture commemorating the 400th anniversary of the *San Juan Bautista*'s initial sailing adopted the theme “Connecting to the Future on the Winds of Hope” (未来へつなぐ希望の風, *Mirai e tsunagu kibō no kaze*).⁶ In November of that year, Sendai City hosted a “Winds of Hope” Forum. Participants included the heads of the Date and Hasekura families, the governor of Miyagi, and the ambassadors of Mexico, Cuba, and Spain.⁷

⁶ Keichō ken'ō shisetsu shuppan yonhyakunen kinen jigyō, “Mirai e tsunagu kibō no kaze” (Sendai: Keichō ken'ō shisetsu shuppan yonhyakunen kinen jigyō jikō iinkai), 2011.

⁷ Ibid. A representative from the Italian Embassy also attended.

Hope invokes a darker backdrop. The forum welded the instructional and inspirational example of the embassy to ongoing efforts for the recovery and revitalization of Tōhoku following the 2011 earthquake, tsunami, and nuclear accidents that have devastated the area. Organizers and participants constructed Date and Hasekura as models of dynamic engagement, connecting the embassy's history to a brighter, aspirational future for the region. These narratives in turn form part of the ongoing debate in Japan about its cultural, economic, and diplomatic relationship to the rest of the globe.

This engaging and positive account is inspiring, while suggesting at the same time that Japan might still need to overcome itself. If Date and Hasekura are now used to motivate connections between the local and the global, there remains the sense that the nation has run interference. Granting the two men foresight necessitates diagnosing the country as myopic. Date and Hasekura are often made the victim of Tokugawa intolerance as much or more than Spanish disinterest. The interest and opportunities presented by “the world” are assumed, as is Japan's supposed difficulty in recognizing them. Valorizing the men and their mission risks detaching them from the context of Tokugawa outreach that helped determine the contours of Pacific trade.

The instructional potential of this outreach is not limited to Japanese history, nor to considerations of those putatively exceptional instances when Japan considered the world. Often early modern Japan seems to be acknowledged as in the world but not quite of it. The keynote address at the “Winds of Hope” forum reflected this trend, titled “Japan within the World and the Keichō Embassy” (*Sekai no naka no Nihon to Keichō ken'ō shisetsu*, 世界のなかの日本と慶長遣欧使節).⁸ “Japan within the World” maintains “the world” as open and undifferentiated, and

⁸ Hirakawa Arata, “Sekai no naka no Nihon to Keichō ken'ō shisetsu,” (lecture, Kibō no kaze forum, Sendai, November 1, 2013).

evokes context rather than dynamism. This dissertation has attempted a little of both, providing context in order to demonstrate the impact of Japanese experimentation in the worlds of the Spanish monarchy, the commercial networks of East Asia and the Pacific, and the models of diplomatic engagement that these polities elected to pursue.

Tokugawa and Date outreach also raises questions about expansion, another recurrently defining feature in our accounts of the world. Narratives of expansion often adopt a European hue, prioritizing the experiences of and reactions to European empire. But expansion was not a given, nor was it always proposed by Europeans. Furthermore, the most expansive European empire of the seventeenth century proved quite guarded in its response to just a few vessels sailing where they were not expected. Pacific diplomacy between the Tokugawa and Habsburgs also suggest how carefully delineated, even circumscribed, “expansion” was in practice. Competition, aggression, and mercantilism among successive European powers is a familiar story, but here the threat of competition came from outside of Europe, provoking different responses in the absence of familiar solutions and the methods for obtaining them.

Tokugawa Japan’s experiments with expansion also contribute to the larger project of analyzing efforts by non-European polities to press against and explore the boundaries of the early modern world. The Tokugawa were not alone in reaching out and reaching back; the early Ottoman Empire and Zheng rule over part of Taiwan are two other examples.⁹ Comparison among different case studies remains a wide avenue of potential inquiry beyond an East-West framework still difficult to evade entirely, this dissertation included. Finally, Japan’s Pacific outreach can help foster reassessments of encounter not by assuming expansion and reaction but

⁹ See, respectively, Giancarlo Casale, *The Ottoman Age of Exploration* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010); Tonio Andrade, *Lost Colony: The Untold Story of China’s First Great Victory over the West* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011).

by exploring the priorities of a variegated set of policies and their capacities to meet them. In these ways Date and Hasekura alike serve as instructive examples not just for situating Japan in the world, but for exploring the dynamics animating human experience the world over.

A tension exists that makes it difficult to hold the Keichō Embassy, Japan, and “the world” together in conversation. Date’s mission is construed as a romantic curiosity, a rare instance when a Japanese leader sought to strengthen the archipelago’s ties with new peoples and new lands. However, appreciating the embassy on those terms requires distancing the embassy from the course of a seemingly insular history of Japan. Holding the Keichō Embassy up for increased attention has also relegated the embassy to a detached limbo, inhabiting the perceived space between the Japanese archipelago and the rest of the world. This account has sought to bridge the distance between all three.

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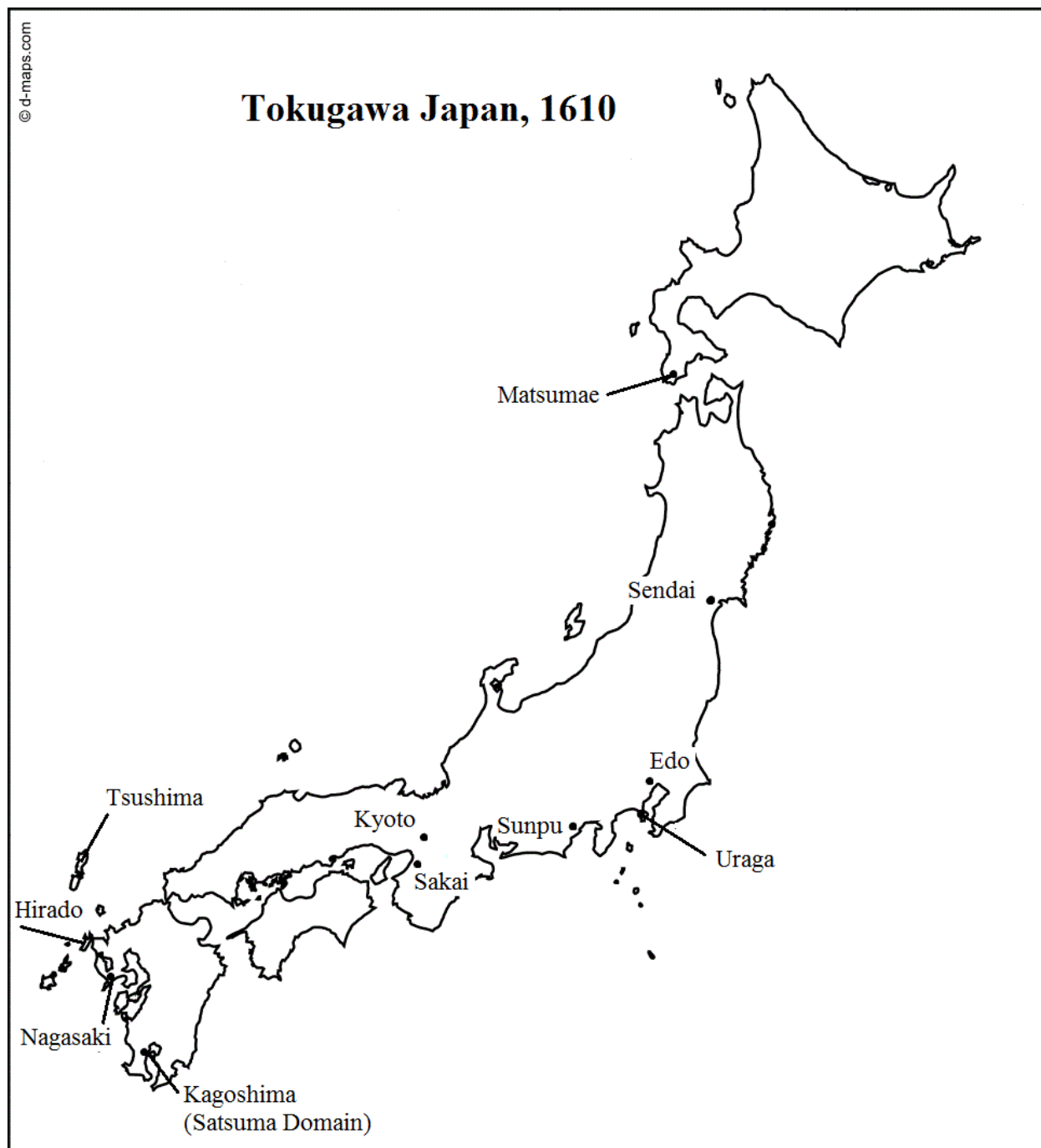
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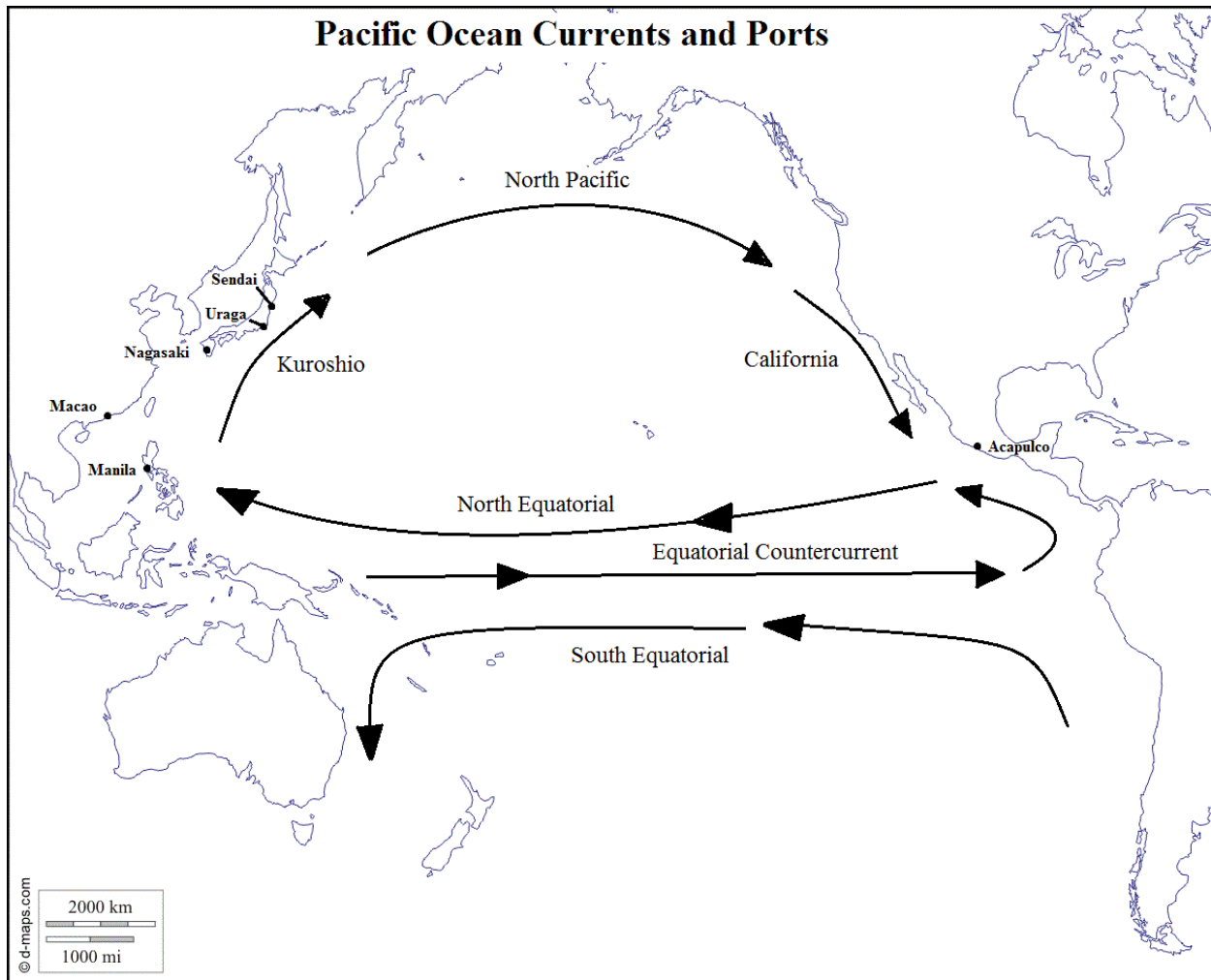
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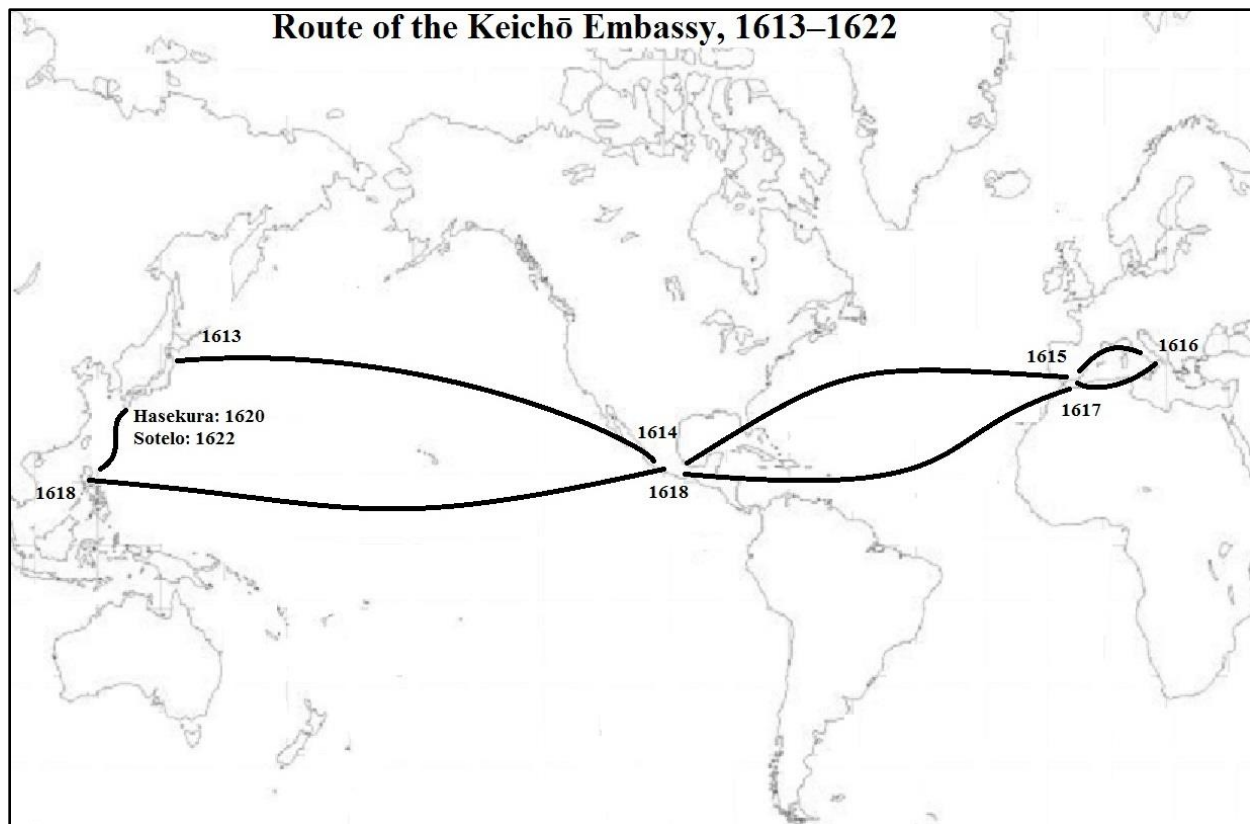
Appendix A: Maps



Map 1. *Tokugawa Japan, 1610*



Map 2. *Pacific Ocean Currents and Ports*



Map 3: *Route of the Keichō Embassy, 1613–1622*

Appendix B: Images

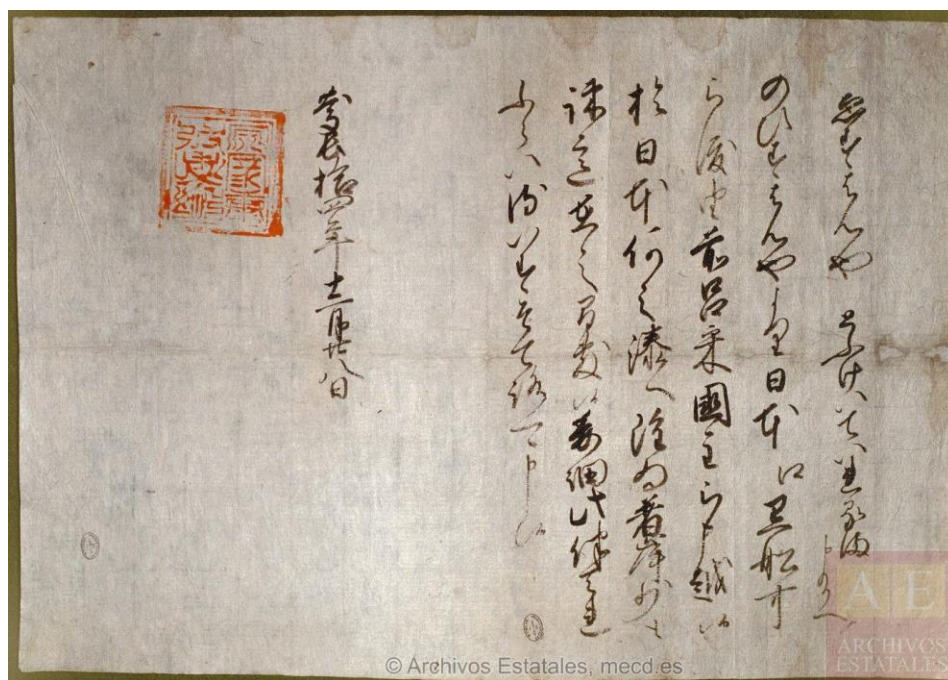


Image 1. Tokugawa Ieyasu's letter to the Duke of Lerma, 1610 (AGI, Seville)

Accessed via pares.mcu.es

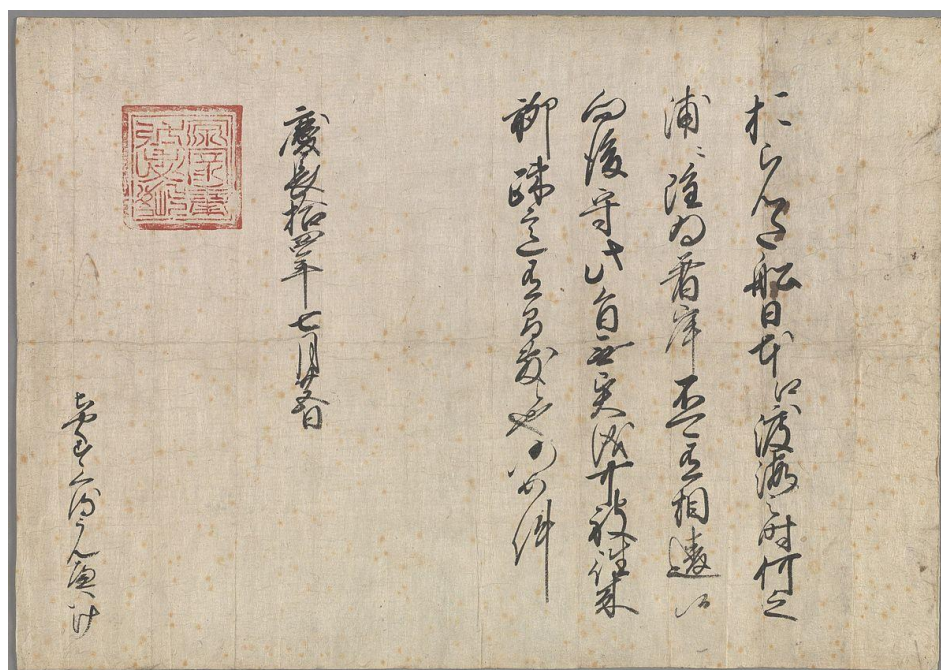


Image 2. Tokugawa Ieyasu's trading pass to Dutch VOC, 1609

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Image 3. *Portrait of Hasekura, 1615 [?]* (Sendai City Museum)
Public Domain, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=601893>



Image 4. *Portrait of Pope Paul V, 1615 [?]* (Sendai City Museum)
Public Domain, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:PaoloHasekura.jpg>



Image 5. *Portrait of Hasekura by Claude Deruet, 1615 (Private Collection)*
Public Domain, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Hasekura_in_Rome.JPG



Image 6. *Rokuemon Hasekura, Luis Sotelo, and Japanese Companions*, by Agostino Tassi, Giovanni Lanfranco, Carlo Saraceni, and others, 1616–17 (Quirinale Palace, Rome)
Public Domain, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:HasekuraQuirinale.jpg>



Image 7. Hasekura's certificate of Roman Citizenship, 1615 (Sendai City Museum)
Public Domain, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:HasekuraRomanCitizenship.jpg>

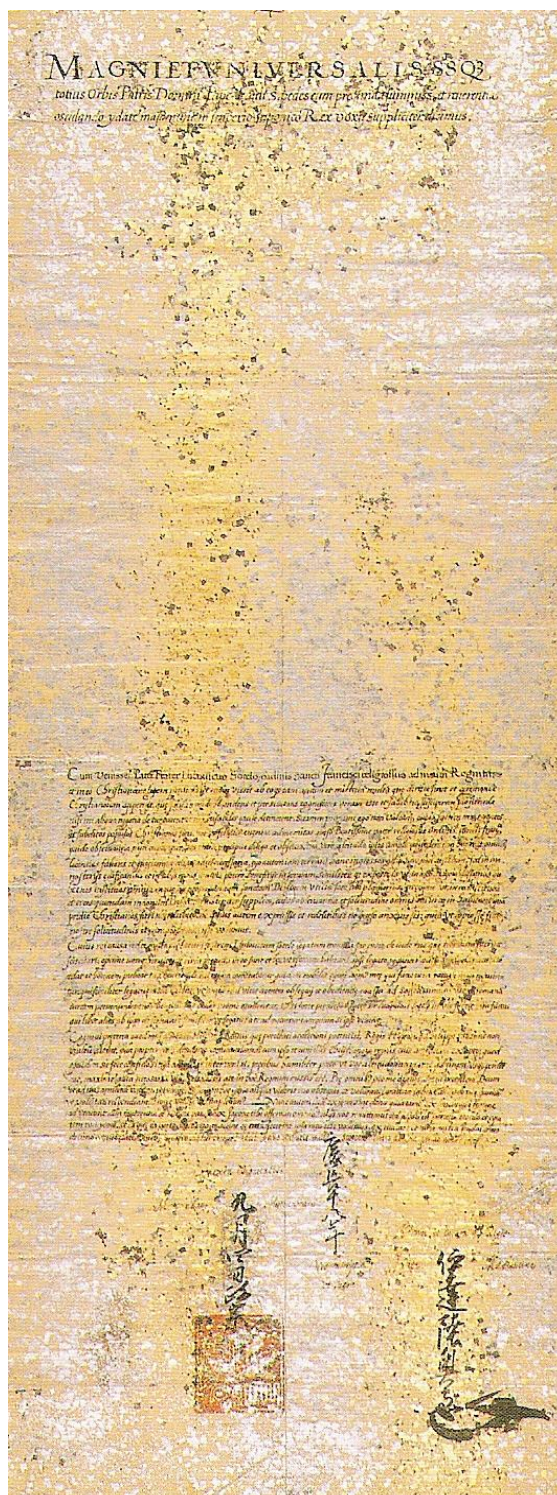


Image 8. Date Masamune's Letter to Pope Paul V, 1613
Public Domain, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:DateMasammuneToPope.jpg>



Image 9. Full-Scale Replica of the San Juan Bautista in Ishinomaki, Japan
Public Domain, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Sanjuanbautista.jpg>

Appendix C: Timeline

Figure 1. *Vessel Traffic between Japan and New Spain, 1610–1620*

<u>Departure</u>	<u>Vessel Name</u>	<u>Vessel Origin</u>	<u>Route</u>	<u>Principal Passengers</u>
1610.08	<i>San Buena Ventura</i>	Japan	Uraga – Acapulco	Rodrigo de Vivero Alonso Muñoz Tanaka Shōsuke
*Vessel purchased by the viceroy of New Spain.				
1611.03	<i>San Francisco</i>	New Spain	Acapulco – Uraga	Tanaka Shōsuke Sebastián Vizcaíno
* Vessel damaged by storm in 1612, rendered unfit for further travel.				
1612.10	<i>San Sebastian</i>	Japan	Uraga – N/A	Luis Sotelo
*Foundered within a day.				
1613.10	<i>San Juan Bautista</i> (1 st crossing)	Japan	Tsukinoura (Sendai) – Acapulco	Hasekura Tsunenaga Luis Sotelo Sebastián Vizcaíno Tanaka Shōsuke
1615.04	<i>San Juan Bautista</i> (2 nd crossing)	“ ”	Acapulco – Uraga	Diego de Santa Catalina
1616.09	<i>San Juan Bautista</i> (3 rd crossing)	“ ”	Uraga – Acapulco	Diego de Santa Catalina Yokozawa Shōgen
1618.04	<i>San Juan Bautista</i> (4 th crossing)	“ ”	Acapulco – Manila	Hasekura Tsunenaga Yokozawa Shōgen Luis Sotelo
*Vessel purchased by the governor-general of the Philippines.				

Chronology adopted from Gono Takashi, Hasekura Tsunenaga (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 2003), 265–273.